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C. M. ANTONY

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THE SIGNADOU

IN ST. DOMINIC'S COUNTRY

BY

C. M. ANTONY

AUTHOR OF "JOAN OF ARC, THE MAID OF FRANCE," "THE ANGELICAL CARDINAL, REGINALD POLE," "ST. ANTONY OF PADUA," "ST. PIUS V."

EDITED, WITH A PREFACE, BY THE

REV. T. M. SCHWERTNER, O.P., S.T.L.

"*O Salutaris Hostia*
Spes unica fidelium,
In Te confidit Francia
Da Pacem, Salva Lilium."

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TO

T. M. S.

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PREFACE

If we would understand why the Middle Ages—which were in the full sense of the term the Ages of Faith—saw the rise and rapid spread of many strange and dangerous heresies, we must look back to the times which immediately followed upon the inrushing of the barbarian peoples of the North. The countless bands of missionaries sent forth by Rome at intervals to bear the good tidings of salvation to these half-savage hordes; to soften their hard hearts, and to teach them to harden their hands by a labour which was sanctified by prayer—the missionaries soon saw the proud heads of these untamed children of the mountain and forest bow meekly at the baptismal font to receive the waters of regeneration. However, if the young nations of Europe put on the yoke of Christ right gladly, they rebelled at intervals against its constant chafing upon the shoulders which had known no other burden than battleaxe and spear. Again and again the loud call to the cruel sports of their former life, to war and barbarous massacre, rang in the ears of these new converts who had but now been listening to the words of peace, to the hard sayings of Christian asceticism. Against their own consciences and the words of Christ's heralds they fared forth to battle—and how could men whose passion for slaying was aroused curb the other passions of their hearts?

Of old the Inspired Word was written: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." The penitent warrior who came trembling to the Church, to be shriven from his sins, was bidden to put aside for God's poor some of the spoil he had taken. It

was the Church alone which, in days raw, rude, and rough, was able to carry on any kind of charitable work and activity; it was she who alone was able to administer the alms of generosity or penance to the poor. And whilst the feudal lord set aside lands and their rents for the needy and suffering, he did not forget, in his gratitude, to endow the Church who had made it possible for him thus to ease his conscience.

But the heart of man is soon corrupted by wealth. Those who were the almoners of Europe, the priests of God, gradually fell from their high estate of gospel poverty and Christian unselfishness, by the riches which their predecessors—better men than they—had voluntarily engaged themselves to dispense to the poor. Many of the clergy who possessed great riches and ample incomes began to tread devious paths. The poorer clergy (especially the rural priests) were compelled by the very nature of the gifts handed over to the Church for the poor, to till the land, engage in secular business, and drive bargains with their neighbours for their surplus grain. We can easily understand now why there was a veritable steeplechase for rich benefices and canonries; and why on the other hand the studies of the priest were neglected, why the people were left without instruction; why, in a word, the spiritual side of the priesthood was gradually by the very nature of the case obscured, and sometimes almost lost sight of. Furthermore, the State was anxious to see in high places men who were favourably disposed towards the crown, and this lay at the bottom of the State's pretensions to appoint priests and bishops to their charges. Lay investiture, which Hildebrand had looked upon as the crying abuse of his time, had been a scandal to Christendom, and a significant object-esson to princes.

If then heresies arose in an age that longed to be Catholic, the fact can be ascribed to causes that began to operate far back in the past. A married clergy, a clergy occupied with secular affairs, a clergy whose appointment depended on the

favour of the king, could not be expected to be sensitive about heresy. Though in the thirteenth century many of the grosser abuses had been stamped out, thanks to the reform which spread, radium-like, from Cluny, and to the high ideals which Rome ever set before her ministers, still it is true that the conscience of Europe had been scandalised in its youth. And when heresy did arise the Christian European States did not possess that innate antipathy to error which depends largely on purity of life and thought. The clergy too, as a body, was no longer moved by that apostolic spirit which can thrive only in a heart which has had no other love in life than zeal for the beauty of the Lord's house, and the desire for a personal conscious union with the Master. It must not surprise us, therefore, to find Albigensianism favoured on one hand by the "most Christian State" of Europe, and on the other hand, allowed to live by a clergy whose main interests lay in temporal matters.

Naturally enough, the people who could not reason for themselves on abstract questions drew the conclusions for their practical every-day life from the attitude of the clergy and princes towards heresy. Since their rulers did not set the example of relentless opposition to the new teachings, the simple folk began to dally with the dangerous doctrines which to them seemed harmless enough, since they were dressed out in precisely those colours which appealed mightily to the eye of mediæval serf and "man." Then, too, the wary Catharist leaders held out earthly advantages which were hard to resist

Thus it came about that the hideous teachings of Catharism, which struck at the root of Christianity, were quickly accepted by the simple folk of Southern France. The eternal question of the Origin of Evil, which has puzzled the unlearned from the beginning, was explained by the Dualism of the Catharist. Crude as the explanation was, the masses were not then intellectually fitted for a nicer solution. Wisely did the innovators caricature—even while denying—the sacramental

system of the Church; for the Catharists had a curious and lengthy ritual. For to the mediæval man all outward symbolism and pageantry appealed most strongly. He was taught chiefly, if not entirely, by his eye; the only "conduit-pipe of education" then opened to him. The Catharists stormed still another citadel of the Faith when they made a great show of austerity and mortification, for a man in those days was sincere enough with himself to wish to do violent penance in atonement for a violent life of sin and wrongdoing. The esoteric rites and practices of Catharism fired the imagination of the people, who held that all august secrets must be fenced in by a picket of mysterious and significant observances. And for the wild passions that blazed like a furnace in the heart of the stalwart warrior, Albigensianism had fuel in a morality which was as vague and flexible as might be wished for by any barbarian hedonist.

The Catharist movement was supremely dangerous. It was utterly anti-Christian in its teaching. Guiraud has shown that its main tenets filtered into the Occident from the old pagan Orient by means of Manichæism. It adopted some Christian practices the better to obtain a footing among the Christian peoples of Europe. It struck at the very foundations of society in so far as it advocated the rejection of marriage, and insisted on the duty of race suicide. The "*endura*" opened a way of escape to such as might long have been useful members of society.

If the mediæval world was saved from this mighty cataclysm it was in great part due to St. Dominic, who with wisdom and foresight, and true knowledge of the needs of the hour, threw up the impregnable dykes of Catholic teaching and morality against the murky waters that rushed onward and downward. Others before him had essayed to stem the tide. But their defence was unavailing because they had failed to measure the strength of the force opposed to them. Dominic Guzman, with the best and purest Gothic blood in

his veins, came to the desolate plains of Languedoc, and before taking up his sword in defence of the Bride of Christ studied well the strength of his foes; their weapons, method of warfare, and plans of campaign. Long he wrought at the forge of prayer; and when he did go forth to face the enemy, his blade was keen and his arm right strong. Not for him were tilt and tourney; he was ready to lay down his life in mortal combat for the Church in France.

It is because St. Dominic was pre-eminently a warrior, because he was rigid and uncompromising as regards the things of God, that he is looked upon as a forbidding, frowning figure by the historian. Just as the Church is heir to the hoarded hatred of the wicked and unbelieving, so Dominic—because he identified himself and his Order with the Church in becoming the sworn champion of her teaching—will never be a popular hero of history. But to those who love the truth—and Dominic is daily hailed by his children as "*Prædicator Veritatis*," whilst his Order is known as the "*Ordo Veritatis*" even to its enemies,[1] and in the private revelations of the saintly Benedictine nun which antedated its foundation—to those who love the truth, I say, his memory is a precious thing, and his name a boast. Like some mighty snow-capped giant of the Alps rising magnificent to the clear sky, above the lesser peaks, above the mists of the valley the figure of St. Dominic towers above his fellows, above the disguising, concealing haze of history, as the summit of Mont Blanc soars above the clouds, aloof and pure.

It was a glimpse of the greatness of Dominic, it was the charm which hangs like a halo round the Holy Man of Calaruega that drew the author of the present work to all those spots which he had sanctified by his presence whilst battling at close grips with the Catharist heresy. We learn here how St. Dominic sanctified his soul by prayer and mortification, so that, having preached to others, he did not

[1] *e.g.* Louis the Bavarian.

himself become a castaway; we learn how his quick, alert eye saw the evils that clamoured for a remedy, and how by Heaven's own inspiration he founded an Order that by preaching should oppose the active propaganda of the Catharists, whilst at the same time it should ensure to the Church a race of messengers of the Great King's secret; an Order devoted to teaching the science of God, by which it should expatriate the Albigensian masters from their schools, and give to the Church a steady procession of theologians who would be able to give a reason for the Faith that was in them; an Order which, later on, by strict command of the Pope, should send forth a line of Inquisitors, jealous for the integrity of that Faith. We learn too how he took compassion on the poor women whom the Albigensians had ensnared, and how he made them the beloved daughters of Christ; we learn finally how he won for himself the right to the title of the "*Cid of Catholicism*," the "*Second Martel*," in that he supported Simon de Montfort, by his advice, encouragement, and prayers, in the Crusade which the Vicar of Christ on the Vatican Hill—the "Watchman on the Tower of Israel"—proclaimed against the Albigensians and the renegade Catholic princes they had won to their side. It is, in sooth, a beautiful story we find here; beautifully told, beautifully illustrated; warm with the enthusiasm which comes from the admiration of a great and good man's life and deeds; clear and convincing by reason of the light which it throws on the circumstances that went to the making of a saint.

"*Les pélérinages ne sont pas dans nos mœurs*," remarked M. Thiers one day in the French Parliament to the members of the left wing who were agitated over the manifestations of Lourdes. It is earnestly to be hoped that the present work will disprove the French atheist's saying; that it will bring into vogue the salutary custom of going on pilgrimage to the places where, after seven centuries, St. Dominic still lives in

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FR. THOS. M. SCHWERTNER, O.P.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
October 1912.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

If it is ever permissible to attempt to disarm criticism beforehand, I should like to try to do so here, as regards one or two points connected with this book. For the title I will not apologise, though many friends, both French and English, have already pointed out that "St. Dominic's Country" was, in the literal sense of the words, not France but Spain. But if anyone who reads this fragmentary account of the Saint's fourteen years' mission in Languedoc does not agree with me as to the identity of St. Dominic's country, I shall have written in vain.

The book is not a life of St. Dominic—not even a connected history of the Saint between 1205–1219, the period which he passed almost entirely in France. Still less, though several chapters deal with this much discussed war, does it claim to be a history of the Albigensian Crusade. That history has yet to be written. It is simply an attempt to describe St. Dominic's country as it is to-day, for the benefit of those of his children who have not, and may never have, the opportunity of visiting it; and to stir in the hearts of others for whom such a pilgrimage is possible, a great desire to make it! With such descriptions history naturally links itself, and each town, each village is fragrant with memories of St. Dominic, many—though by no means all—of which are noted in their place.

The limitations and shortcomings of such a book are self-evident. Owing to the fact that three ancient monasteries, Boulbonne, Hauterive, and Saverdun, which St. Dominic certainly visited, are not here described, the record of the

places familiar to him is imperfect. I am also perfectly aware that critics will take exception to the fact that many proper names are given in French, while others are in English. Especially has this been the case as regards churches and sacred buildings. But it is extraordinarily difficult to write about French people and places, and give them English names, which in many cases are quite unlike their own. Those of celebrated persons which are almost household words have as a rule been Anglicised—*e.g.* Peter of Castelnau—for there is no fear of their being mistaken; but in the case of less important people, the names have been allowed to stand in French. Nor has there been a hard and fast rule about the employment of French terms, for this book does not profess to be critical. Again, many towns through which it is a geographical necessity that St. Dominic must have passed—*e.g.* Arles, Nîmes, and Avignon—have been omitted, simply because there is absolutely no record of his presence there. We can be certain that he visited St. Trophimus at Arles, Notre Dame des Doms at Avignon, but we are told not one word about it. Therefore these, and many other places, which it would have been a delight to describe, are left out because they are in no way connected with the mission which it is the design of this book to relate, though neither connectedly nor completely.

It will also almost certainly be objected that there is too much of the pilgrim and too little of St. Dominic—especially in some of the chapters. But—as in the case of Albi, of which we have only proof-presumptive that Dominic ever visited at all—the details given of his work are often so slight as to be almost negligible. His mission must be judged by its great result, and that result was the foundation of his First and Second Orders. Beside that, details are comparatively unimportant.

"In St. Dominic's Country" is the outcome of a suggestion made two years ago by a Dominican friend, to whose inspiration, encouragement, learning, and self-denying help, not only the idea, but the actual compilation of the book is due. It is

to him I dedicate, with deep gratitude, what is really almost as much his work as my own ; as I thank him for suggesting a pilgrimage so attractive—one already familiar to himself.

I am also sincerely grateful to a large number of *savants*, who have contributed not only valuable information but invaluable criticism. In a list of names far too long for quotation, which includes many French Dominican fathers, and the clergy of nearly all the parishes I visited—whom I would specially thank for their unfailing courtesy and kindness—a few must specially be mentioned: The Very Rev. Fr. Pierre Mandonnet, O.P., a historian of European fame, who has generously undertaken most of the responsibility of the French translation of this book, to which he is writing a Preface; The Very Rev. Fr. H. A. Montagne, O.P., Editor of the *Révue Thomiste*, and the Rev. F. M. Cazes, O.P., its secretary. Many Dominicans of this University, both Professors and students, have contributed expert information on various subjects. It was to gain such information that the book was written at Fribourg. I would also specially thank the Very Rev. Jean Lestrade, Curé of Gragnague, Hte. Garonne, an eminent archæologist, and Mlle. Louise Guiraud of Montpellier, a well-known historical critic.

As regards the pictures I must also say a word. Some places are not illustrated at all, while of others several different views are given. The former are those in which, so far as we know, nothing is left on which St. Dominic's eyes could have rested; the latter are still full of traces of his presence, *e.g.* Fanjeaux and Montréal. To the Rev. Fr. Rosaire Eckert, O.P., of Toulouse, whose seventeen beautiful photographs have been specially taken for us, this book owes much of its value. The thanks of all Dominicans are due to him. I am also anxious personally to express my gratitude to M. Michel Jordy of Carcassonne, not only for his generous gift of the four photographs of the High City, but for his kindness in assisting me to procure many of the other pictures. To Mme. Malfilatre we are indebted for the charming views of St. Lizier.

was the Church alone which, in days raw, rude, and rough, was able to carry on any kind of charitable work and activity; it was she who alone was able to administer the alms of generosity or penance to the poor. And whilst the feudal lord set aside lands and their rents for the needy and suffering, he did not forget, in his gratitude, to endow the Church who had made it possible for him thus to ease his conscience.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

If it is ever permissible to attempt to disarm criticism beforehand, I should like to try to do so here, as regards one or two points connected with this book. For the title I will not apologise, though many friends, both French and English, have already pointed out that "St. Dominic's Country" was, in the literal sense of the words, not France but Spain. But if anyone who reads this fragmentary account of the Saint's fourteen years' mission in Languedoc does not agree with me as to the identity of St. Dominic's country, I shall have written in vain.

The book is not a life of St. Dominic—not even a connected history of the Saint between 1205–1219, the period which he passed almost entirely in France. Still less, though several chapters deal with this much discussed war, does it claim to be a history of the Albigensian Crusade. That history has yet to be written. It is simply an attempt to describe St. Dominic's country as it is to-day, for the benefit of those of his children who have not, and may never have, the opportunity of visiting it; and to stir in the hearts of others for whom such a pilgrimage is possible, a great desire to make it! With such descriptions history naturally links itself, and each town, each village is fragrant with memories of St. Dominic, many—though by no means all—of which are noted in their place.

The limitations and shortcomings of such a book are self-evident. Owing to the fact that three ancient monasteries, Boulbonne, Hauterive, and Saverdun, which St. Dominic certainly visited, are not here described, the record of the

places familiar to him is imperfect. I am also perfectly aware that critics will take exception to the fact that many proper names are given in French, while others are in English. Especially has this been the case as regards churches and sacred buildings. But it is extraordinarily difficult to write about French people and places, and give them English names, which in many cases are quite unlike their own. Those of celebrated persons which are almost household words have as a rule been Anglicised—*e.g.* Peter of Castelnau—for there is no fear of their being mistaken; but in the case of less important people, the names have been allowed to stand in French. Nor has there been a hard and fast rule about the employment of French terms, for this book does not profess to be critical. Again, many towns through which it is a geographical necessity that St. Dominic must have passed—*e.g.* Arles, Nîmes, and Avignon—have been omitted, simply because there is absolutely no record of his presence there. We can be certain that he visited St. Trophimus at Arles, Notre Dame des Doms at Avignon, but we are told not one word about it. Therefore these, and many other places, which it would have been a delight to describe, are left out because they are in no way connected with the mission which it is the design of this book to relate, though neither connectedly nor completely.

It will also almost certainly be objected that there is too much of the pilgrim and too little of St. Dominic—especially in some of the chapters. But—as in the case of Albi, of which we have only proof-presumptive that Dominic ever visited at all—the details given of his work are often so slight as to be almost negligible. His mission must be judged by its great result, and that result was the foundation of his First and Second Orders. Beside that, details are comparatively unimportant.

"In St. Dominic's Country" is the outcome of a suggestion made two years ago by a Dominican friend, to whose inspiration, encouragement, learning, and self-denying help, not only the idea, but the actual compilation of the book is due. It is

to him I dedicate, with deep gratitude, what is really almost as much his work as my own ; as I thank him for suggesting a pilgrimage so attractive—one already familiar to himself.

I am also sincerely grateful to a large number of *savants*, who have contributed not only valuable information but invaluable criticism. In a list of names far too long for quotation, which includes many French Dominican fathers, and the clergy of nearly all the parishes I visited—whom I would specially thank for their unfailing courtesy and kindness—a few must specially be mentioned: The Very Rev. Fr. Pierre Mandonnet, O.P., a historian of European fame, who has generously undertaken most of the responsibility of the French translation of this book, to which he is writing a Preface; The Very Rev. Fr. H. A. Montagne, O.P., Editor of the *Révue Thomiste*, and the Rev. F. M. Cazes, O.P., its secretary. Many Dominicans of this University, both Professors and students, have contributed expert information on various subjects. It was to gain such information that the book was written at Fribourg. I would also specially thank the Very Rev. Jean Lestrade, Curé of Gragnague, Hte. Garonne, an eminent archæologist, and Mlle. Louise Guiraud of Montpellier, a well-known historical critic.

As regards the pictures I must also say a word. Some places are not illustrated at all, while of others several different views are given. The former are those in which, so far as we know, nothing is left on which St. Dominic's eyes could have rested; the latter are still full of traces of his presence, *e.g.* Fanjeaux and Montréal. To the Rev. Fr. Rosaire Eckert, O.P., of Toulouse, whose seventeen beautiful photographs have been specially taken for us, this book owes much of its value. The thanks of all Dominicans are due to him. I am also anxious personally to express my gratitude to M. Michel Jordy of Carcassonne, not only for his generous gift of the four photographs of the High City, but for his kindness in assisting me to procure many of the other pictures. To Mme. Malfilatre we are indebted for the charming views of St. Lizier.

The most interesting picture to many will be that taken for this book by the Very Rev. Dr. Franz Steffens, Professor of Palæography in the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), who has reproduced a page from a fourteenth-century MS. in the Museum at Bâle, of which he has kindly made a transcription. (See Appendix B.) To him I would specially offer my affectionate thanks—for much more than the picture. This list, too, might be lengthened indefinitely, but those whose names for want of space cannot be mentioned are by no means forgotten.

If this Picture-Book of St. Dominic stir up in the heart of any one of his children a desire to visit this beautiful country, by far the most mediæval part of the France of to-day, it will have achieved one purpose for which it has been written. For no one who makes a pilgrimage to St. Dominic's Country but will learn not only to know our Saint better, to understand and appreciate more intensely his glorious work, but to love him with all his heart.

C. M. ANTONY.

FRIBOURG, SWITZERLAND,
July 15, 1912.

IN ST. DOMINIC'S COUNTRY

I

THE ANCIENT ROAD TO CASTELNAU

THE way into St. Dominic's Country is along the Ancient Road to Castelnau, which leads through Montpellier to the great Roman highway between Italy and Spain, by which the mediæval traveller passed through one of the fairest regions of the France of long ago; the fruitful, sunny provinces of Provence, Languedoc, and Guienne.

It is at Castelnau we meet St. Dominic at the outset of his mission in the spring of 1205; it is here we begin our pilgrimage through the country in which he spent the fourteen most important years of his life; where he founded his First and Second Orders; and of which he may most truly be said to be the Apostle.

Castelnau is a little village on the heights behind the fine old city of Montpellier, which in St. Dominic's day prided itself on its title of Catholic in the midst of the universal corruption of the Midi[1] by the Albigensian heresy. On the history of Montpellier itself we need not dwell, interesting as it is, for the town has no special connection with St. Dominic, beyond the fact that he must have passed through it several times, and that he was certainly present here when in January 1215 Simon de Montfort was proclaimed Lord Paramount of

[1] The word "Midi" is used throughout this book to designate the ancient provinces of Provence, Languedoc, and Guienne, as it is at present used in France to designate the corresponding departments of Aude, Ariège, &c. The English word "south" is scarcely an equivalent.

all the territories conquered during the Crusade, in the House of the Knights Templars of St. John of Jerusalem, by the Papal Legate, Pietro di Benevento. There is neither record nor tradition that St. Dominic ever preached here; and though the Council at which he makes his first public appearance is usually known as that of Montpellier, it was really held at Castelnau, to which we are now on pilgrimage.

Just as the last houses of the town begin to give place to gardens and trellised vineyards on the slope of the hill, a road branches off to the right from the highway; a road so shaded by thick trees as to be in summer a mere leafy tunnel; shut in for a great part of its length by old walls, over the top of which long luxuriant green branches have strayed from the vineyard behind. It is a road so inviting, so cool, so peaceful that it would be impossible to resist the temptation to explore it, even if we did not see, high up on the crumbling brown sandstone wall, the inscription, half-effaced by time:

"*L'ancienne Route de Castelnau.*"

Truth compels me to say that to-day a tram runs occasionally—not too often—down the Ancient Road; but even that does not spoil it. Over the wall on the right, which soon becomes a mere low barricade, lies a truly magnificent view. Below the sloping fields and gardens curves the broad expanse of Montpellier, grey-brown roofs, and towers set in trees clustering round its fourteenth-century Cathedral; and beyond, as far as the eye can reach on all sides, stretching to the Mediterranean littoral, sleeps a broad, richly cultivated plain, where the golden green of the vineyards and the silver of the olive groves fade into a soft blue haze like that of the distant sea. Across it lies the white ribbon of the Roman Road from Montpellier to Nîmes and Avignon.

After about a mile the Ancient Road turns abruptly to the left, and through surroundings which to-day at least are less picturesque, leads us straight into the little old-world village of Castelnau. Here, in St. Dominic's day, stood a strong

castle, which has now so completely disappeared that even the site can scarcely be identified. It was built, as was the original village, in the latter half of the eleventh century, from the materials of the vast Castle of Substantion, which stood on a barren rocky slope commanding a glorious view, some few hundred yards to the north of the present village. Substantion was from 737–1037 the seat of the Bishops of Maguelonne,[1] as, in the eighth century, that city, sometimes called Port Sarrasin on account of the number of pirates by which its harbour was continually attacked, had been destroyed by Charles Martel, in order to stop their ceaseless ravages. When in 1037 the Bishop returned to Maguelonne, Substantion was pulled down to build the castle and village of Castelnau,[2] and in 1171 very little was left of its ruins. The New Castle, which is mentioned in an act of 1132,[3] belonged to the noble family of which the Cistercian Legate, Blessed Peter of Castelnau, was a member, and it was doubtless for this reason that within its walls was held that important Conference of 1205 from which dates St. Dominic's actual mission in Languedoc.

Though the castle has disappeared as completely as that of Substantion, the little twelfth-century church still remains on one side of the uneven *Place*, round which stand some curious old houses. Contemporary documents speak of a church dedicated to Our Lady in Castelnau. If, as is not altogether improbable, the title of the existing church has not been changed, this second church has also entirely vanished, in which case it was possibly the castle chapel. But there can be little if any doubt that St. Dominic visited the present Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, which was very near

[1] Built on a low peninsula between the Etang de Vic and the Mediterranean, the fine old Roman Cathedral of St. Peter, which dates from the return of the Bishop to Maguelonne in 1037 (as did the rebuilding of the town), was carefully restored in 1875. In 1563 the Bishopric was transferred to Montpellier, and Maguelonne having become entirely Protestant, the town was destroyed in 1633 by order of Louis XIII. The imposing fortified nave, alone in the desert, is now all that remains of what was once an important Cathedral.

[2] Castelnau=Château Neuf=New Castle.

[3] *Liber instrumentorum memorialium*, p. 497.

the castle, and which was certainly familiar from his boyhood to the great Cistercian martyr of the Albigenses.

A descent of two or three steps leads from the south door into the nave, the western end of which has a curiously low roof vaulted and groined. The rest of the nave, the north aisle, and tiny choir are much higher. To right and left of the arch leading to the sanctuary stand two large modern statues: on one side St. Dominic, bearing a lily and a book; opposite him a Cistercian monk, a lance in one hand, a cross in the other—the martyred Legate, Blessed Peter of Castelnau. The church is well cared for and beautifully clean. On the walls hang many pictures, some extremely curious, a few very good. One remarkable oil-painting of the Crucifixion is in the style of Vandyke. St. John the Baptist stands at the foot of the Cross, holding a spear from which flutters a scroll bearing the legend: "*Ecce Agnus Dei.*" This picture, if not an original, is certainly such an excellent copy of a masterpiece as one rarely finds in a wayside church in France. One charming relic of the time of St. Dominic still remains—the ancient holy-water stoup close to the door, probably of the eleventh century—a deep stone bowl poised like a water-lily bud upon a long and slender stem. This he has surely seen and touched.

It was in the late spring of 1205 that an important Conference—we should perhaps rather call it a Council—was held at Castelnau by the Papal Legates, who for two years had been attempting the apparently hopeless task of the conversion of the Albigenses of Provence and Languedoc, with so little success that they had been seriously debating the advisability of resigning their mission, and begging the Pope to relieve them of a burden too heavy for them to bear. Matters must have been at a very serious pass so completely to discourage the actively heroic spirit of at least two of their number.

It was to the Cistercian Order that Innocent III. had entrusted the task of the evangelisation of the Midi, and the uprooting of that mediæval form of Manichæism known

in France as the Albigensian Heresy;[1] and the three Legates assembled at Castelnau were all Cistercian monks. Their chief, Arnauld Almeric, Abbot of Citeaux, was a man of stern and unbending character, whose hatred of the crooked doctrines of the Catharists and Waldensians was only surpassed by his single-hearted devotion to God, the Church, and his Order. He has been painted by his enemies in the darkest colours. It is of him that one of the most famous lies of history has so often been told—that he cried at the Sack of Béziers (1209): "Kill, kill, the Lord will know His own!"—a slander fortunately completely refuted by critical historians,[2] and in any case unintelligible to an impartial student of his character as portrayed in contemporary history. He was a man of one idea—the triumph of the Church over her enemies, and he was prepared to go even to extremes to ensure that triumph. Prudent, though perhaps narrow in his outlook, the Abbot of Citeaux, if not a great diplomatist, was certainly a good organiser. Honourable, fearless—his enemies called him despotic—he inspired respect rather than affection, fear rather than love. He had not the magnetic power, which was the natural gift of St. Dominic and Simon de Montfort, of attracting men and inspiring them to heroism—a gift essential to all really great leaders. But in spite of his stern rigidity he was not wanting in tenderness. Though the duplicity of Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse, the principal opponent of his mission, had already filled him with disgust, even to Raymond his justice was tempered with mercy, whilst his attitude to Peter of Aragon, hesitating in 1213 on the brink of apostasy, was that of a true father. We shall meet the Abbot of Citeaux often in the course of our pilgrimage; at the outset it is well to understand something of his character, and of the motives which animated a great man who has been cruelly maligned. Appointed by the Pope in 1204 to be Chief Legate in the Midi, he found there two colleagues who had been already engaged for more

[1] See Appendix A.
[2] See Guiraud: *Histoire Partiale, Histoire Vraie*, article "Sac de Béziers."

than a year in the arduous task of fighting the heresy—Fr. Peter of Castelnau and Fr. Raoul, both religious of the Cistercian Abbey of Fontfroide, near Narbonne.

Of Fr. Raoul personally we know little, but from what we do know we picture him as one who infinitely preferred the solitude of his cell, the peace of his cloister, to the tumult of the world; gentle, a lover of study, supremely conscientious, accepting humbly the mission laid upon him by the Holy Father, and devoting himself body and soul in all obedience to the discouraging task, from which death released him in 1207.

Peter of Castelnau was a man of very different stamp, absolutely fearless, deeply, even passionately enthusiastic, counting the risk of his own life a small thing if thereby he might gain a single soul. Eloquent and highly gifted, his zeal, his energy, were boundless; his burning desire to gain men from heresy daily gained in intensity. His whole soul was in his mission, and neither threats nor attempted violence discouraged him. For an entire year (1205–6) he worked single-handed in Provence, which he specially loved, and where he gained the crown of martyrdom on the banks of the Rhone, in January 1208.

If St. Dominic is the Apostle of Languedoc, Peter of Castelnau merits equally the title of Apostle of Provence.

The other members of the Council, whose names are unknown, were doubtless prelates from the ecclesiastical province of Arles, with a certain number of Cistercian Abbots. The Bishopric of Toulouse was vacant—its last occupant having been deposed for simony—the Bishop of Agde was under sentence of suspension, the Bishop of Béziers had also been deposed, and the Archbishop of Narbonne, an old man who very strongly disapproved of the line already taken by the Legates, being desirous of "peace at any price," and who had already appealed against them, is not likely to have been present. So terrible, so universal was the spread of Catharism in the Midi, that even the prelates of the Church were tainted with the fatal heresy.

To these ecclesiastics sitting in council in the old castle, sorrowful and desponding, were announced two visitors, one of whom was well known to them by name, and whom they welcomed warmly, for they all knew that if any man could counsel them in their present difficulty, that man was the Spanish Bishop of Osma in Castile, Don Diego d'Azevedo. The prelate was accompanied by his friend and chaplain, a young priest in the white habit and surplice of an Augustinian Canon; slender, fair-haired, of medium height, with a face whose beauty those who saw it never forgot. His eyes were large, clear, yet piercing; from his broad brow seemed to radiate a supernatural light; his whole bearing was angelic. He was presented to the assembly by the Bishop of Osma as Brother Dominic de Guzman, Sub-Prior of Osma. The impression he made was evidently great, for he was immediately admitted by the Legates to their Council, and listened, beside Don Diego, to the sad story they hastened to relate.

Don Diego of Osma is far too little remembered by Dominicans to-day. It was he who, if he did not actually form the character of St. Dominic, at least influenced him more than any other human being, and directed him in his true vocation. He was the Elias whose mantle was soon to fall upon the new Eliseus. Canon of St. Augustine and Prior of Osma, he had been appointed Bishop of that See in 1200, at the death of Martin de Bazan, the holy prelate who had introduced the Rule of St. Augustine to the Cathedral Chapter of Osma, and who in 1198 had summoned thither from Palencia Brother Dominic de Guzman, the report of whose virtues had reached him through Don Diego. Two years later, when Don Diego himself succeeded Martin de Bazan, Dominic was appointed by him to the sub-Priorate, and became his Bishop's closest friend, the recipient of his confidences, the sharer of his enthusiasm. For Don Diego was consumed with zeal for the evangelisation of the heathen, and such enthusiasm as his is infectious. It was then that St. Dominic appeared "like a luminous star in the midst of his brethren . . . like a city set on a hill . . . the first

in holiness, the last in the humility of his heart, diffusing around him a perfume . . . like that of incense on a summer day." So writes his son, Blessed Jordan of Saxony, in words as true as they are beautiful. Dominic's whole soul, we are told, was bent on perfection. Like another glorious contemporary Saint, Antony of Padua, once also a Canon of St. Augustine, between whose short career and that of St. Dominic so many parallels could be drawn, the foundations of his apostolate were laid in the cloister, by days and nights of ceaseless prayer. And Don Diego loved him as a son.

In 1203 King Alfonso IX. of Léon and Castile appointed the Bishop of Osma on a mission both difficult and delicate. He was sent to Denmark[1] to negotiate a marriage between Alfonso's son, Prince Ferdinand, and a certain Danish princess. He chose Dominic as his companion, and together they set out in the early summer by way of Toulouse and Paris, doubtless visiting Rocamadour on the way, for the court of the King of Denmark. The embassy was successful: the hand of the princess was promised; and joyfully Don Diego and his friend returned to King Alfonso, only to be sent again to Denmark at the head of a splendid cortège intended to escort the bride-elect back to Spain. When they arrived at their destination a second time, the princess was dead.

Then the Bishop of Osma, despatching swift messengers to bear the tidings to the Court of Castile, sending back to Spain a large part of his numerous suite, proposed to Dominic that they two should go on pilgrimage to the Eternal City. He had now a chance of laying his great desire before the Holy Father, without whose permission he could not dream of carrying it out. We can imagine the joy with which Dominic

[1] Bernard Gui gives the name as "Marchia Dacia," of which Denmark is a literal translation. We are told the journey was long and painful. Philip Augustus of France had married Ingeburga of Denmark, and in 1254 Alfonso X. of Castile asked a Norwegian princess in marriage. At the same time, some writers have supposed the "Marchia" to be the Countship of La Marche, in France, whose ruler was Hugh de Lusignan; others again imagine it was one of the Marches of Italy.

agreed; and setting out immediately the pilgrims reached Rome at the beginning of the year 1205.

Here Don Diego besought Pope Innocent III. to relieve him of the burden of the episcopate, which he felt himself unable longer to bear, and to send him as a missionary to the Cuman Tartars, that terrible race which, swarming from Central Asia into Russia and Central Europe, was even then devastating and laying waste all before it. Both requests were refused. Innocent III. understood the holy Bishop's motives, appreciated his humility, sympathised with his enthusiasm, but would not suffer him to go, even without resigning his bishopric, to the wandering tribes beyond the Carpathians. His mission was to be to heretics, not to heathen; though this neither Pope nor Bishop yet understood. And that this refusal of the Holy Father was inspired from on High we cannot doubt; for not only was Don Diego to revive the courage of the disheartened Legates, and to reorganise the mission on entirely new lines, but had he gone to the Tartars Dominic would certainly have accompanied him, and there, assuredly, they would have laid down their lives. The existence of the Order of Preachers was involved in the decision of the Pope.

Full of regret, but acquiescing in the will of God, Don Diego and St. Dominic set out once more on their journey to Spain. They had reached Montpellier when the news reached them of the Council at Castelnau, and Don Diego lost no time in joining the Legates. The two friends climbed the slopes of the hill behind the town, and turning down the Ancient Road to Castelnau, soon reached the castle, and were received with joy by the assembled prelates.

It was one of those pivotal moments when the slightest breath of outside influence will turn the scale of an undecided question. The Legates, on the point of writing to the Pope for permission to resign, were yet loath to abandon the work to which they had been called; Don Diego, fresh from his great renunciation, saw the whole matter from another side. His spirit, quickly sympathetic, took in the position clearly,

felt with and for the Legates, understood their difficulty—and immediately saw the remedy. Perhaps, too, at that instant he understood why God had not accepted his sacrifice. Here, unsought, was a fresh call to entire renunciation of which he had not dreamt. Between his soul and Dominic's there was such complete harmony that one could always rely on the other for intuitive sympathy. The young Canon,[1] who would have followed him to certain death among the Tartars, who encouraged the Bishop in his fiery enthusiasm for martyrdom, had with him accepted the refusal, and would follow him in any course of action he might suggest.

It was then the custom for Papal Legates, even were they monks, to travel in state like Princes of the Church. Not only was the Bishop of Osma well aware of this fact, but he must have seen in the courtyard of the castle the carriages and baggage-waggons, the servants and armed guard considered necessary for the safety, as well as the official dignity, of the envoys of the Holy Father. Therefore, being exceedingly simple and straightforward, when he was asked for his advice —having first requested full details as to the beliefs and customs of the Albigensians—he spoke his mind at once, at the risk of offending the friends whom he was anxious to help.

"I do not think, my brothers," he said, with the winning gentleness which so eminently characterised him, "that you have set about the business in the right way. It seems to me impossible to bring back to the truth, simply by words, men who prefer to words example and acts. Consider these heretics! It is by a deceptive show of poverty and apparent austerity that they persuade the simple. If they see in you an altogether different kind of life, it is probable that you gain few and lose many, for they will refuse to listen to you. Drive out one nail by another; triumph over false sanctity by the true religion. For it is only by humility that the pride of these false apostles can be confounded. St. Paul himself was constrained, 'speaking like a fool,' to disclose his virtues,

[1] St. Dominic was now 35. He was born in 1170.

his perils, the austerity of his life, in order successfully to counteract the obstinacy of those who gloried in their good works."

There was a pause. The Council was troubled. Such advice was revolutionary. It was certainly true that the heretics had lost no opportunity of drawing comparisons between the style in which the Legates travelled and the luxury of their equipment, and the poverty of the Apostles, who were sent out without purse or scrip. It was not that the Cistercians desired these things for their own sake, as they were abundantly to prove, but, as Papal Legates, they had to consider their official position. Still they were well aware that when the heretics had, in the course of argument, been driven into a corner and could find no logical reply they invariably fell back upon the contrast between their own lives and those of their opponents, and thus carried away the ignorant people, who then, as now, invariably judged by appearances. They hesitated. The thing was unheard of, and yet. . . . "If someone would set us the example," said Arnauld of Citeaux grimly, "we might follow him."

Then, we read, the Spirit of the Lord descended upon the Bishop. "Do as you see me do!" he exclaimed, and calling his servants he gave them orders to return immediately with his carriages and all his possessions, to Osma; and retaining beside him only Dominic, his chaplain,[1] declared aloud his intention of remaining in France, to fight the heresy on its own ground and with its own weapons. Henceforward he would travel barefoot, armed only with his staff and breviary, alone or in the company of his brethren, witnessing against the hypocrisy of the heretics the true austerity of a Catholic Apostle.

His noble example was followed by all. The Legates sent away their state equipages, dismissed their retinues, Arnauld Almeric returning on foot to Citeaux to preside at the approaching Chapter General, and to obtain reinforcements of

[1] Some authorities add "and a few young clerics," but this is probably a misapprehension.

missionaries from the cloister; Don Diego, with St. Dominic and the two remaining Legates, setting out also on foot, by way of Montpellier, for a fresh campaign, which was to open by a series of conferences in Southern Languedoc.

Such was the turning-point of the spiritual Crusade, and of the life of St. Dominic. Already his heart had been deeply touched by the misery of the heretics he had encountered on his previous journeys through the country. Two years previously he had wrought his first conversion in Toulouse. It was during his passage through the city, on the occasion of his first embassy to Denmark in 1203, that he lodged in the house of a man who evidently, though he said no word openly, was a convinced heretic. Time pressed; the future apostle had only one night to spend in Toulouse. He passed it in the company of his host, arguing, pleading, setting forth the Truth with such supernatural light that the heretic, first confounded, then softened, lastly utterly melted, renounced his errors, and, kneeling before the Saint, promised henceforth to live as a Catholic Christian—a promise he faithfully kept. From that moment the idea of founding "an Order of Preachers for the Salvation of Sinners" had taken root in Dominic's heart. There, yet dormant, the germ sown by his first convert at Toulouse was at Castelnau to quicken into life; the seed which was to grow and bear fruit an hundredfold. Little did he think, as he walked through the streets of the "Catholic," though too often rebellious, city that within twenty years his dream would be realised here in Montpellier, his sons established in this very place in their own monastery.[1] He who had thirsted for martyrdom among the Cuman Tartars now joyfully welcomed the prospect of that crown among the Albigenses of the Midi—a crown he more than

[1] The Dominican Church and Monastery founded in Montpellier was consecrated 1225 by the Bishop of Maguelonne. In 1562 it was destroyed by the Huguenots, who ravaged the city. No vestige of it now remains. The *faubourg* (suburb) in which it stood was called by St. Dominic's name. The friars were re-established in the Church of St. Matthew, and remained there until the Revolution. The Cathedral was begun in 1364. In St. Dominic's day the Parish Church was that of St. Firmin (also destroyed by the Huguenots). If he preached in Montpellier, it was probably here.

once so nearly gained. His humility, his desire for suffering, were so genuine that in spite of his secret ideal he would have followed Don Diego among the Cumans, counting his own will to be nothing, and the Will of God everything. But from the decisive moment at Castelnau he realised that his first desire was to be granted, and understood that his life henceforth was to be passed, not in fighting paganism, but heresy; not in the peace and prayer of his Spanish cloister, but for a time at least in beautiful Languedoc.

So, in the late spring of 1205[1] we find St. Dominic, as we shall leave him, setting out in steadfast faith, in joyful hope, in fervent charity, towards the unknown.

[1] The chronology of Père Balme in the *Cartulaire* has been adopted throughout; though some historians place the Conference of Castelnau in 1206, and alter other dates accordingly. The *Cartulaire*, that indispensable handbook to all genuine students of the life of St. Dominic, is the foundation of the present volume.

II

THE CONFERENCE AT SERVIAN

It was along the Roman road to Spain that the two Legates, accompanied by the Bishop of Osma and St. Dominic, set their faces when they left Montpellier. Through the lovely, laughing valley, to-day called the "Garden of Hérault," past Pézénas, they skirted the broad lagoons which border the coast of the Mediterranean between Cette and Agde, between which and the sea the railway now runs on an embankment. Here to-day in stormy weather the spray whitens the passing trains, stinging the face of the traveller who leans out to gaze across the heaving, grey waste, and to watch the white-crested waves breaking in fury below, dragging the rattling shingle captive in their retreat. Among the tamarisks and low bushes which fringe the shore of the mainland are scattered pale tents—a gipsy encampment. The sea-breeze drives far inland the smoke of the great fire three old women have lighted; a score of ragged, black-eyed children, with scarlet and orange kerchiefs knotted in their dark hair, race the train.

The colouring of the Midi is characteristic and charming; that of Hérault particularly reminding one of Turner's delicate water-colour sketches. In spring, with its leagues of snowy fruit trees, the dry branches of its myriad vineyards quickening to new life and blossoming into clusters of pale green leaf-buds, its little villages clustering round old church towers, the whole region shut in between the Southern Cevennes and the Mediterranean—flat, but never monotonous, has a certain distinctive beauty. Nor is the country less lovely on a grey day in autumn when the vintage is over, and the only riches of the vineyards are their wealth of golden leaves; when the

great dark-eyed white oxen have dragged the last load of purple grapes to the village wine-press; when the crops of maize are gathered in from the sorrowful fields, across which long lines of cypress or silvery willows move in procession towards the long, low, northern horizon, where the Montagne Noire, veiled in sheeted rain, always bare, sombre, mysterious, rises here and there into magnificence. Along a field-path a dozen peasants in grey-blue blouses plod in single file, one holding by the hand a tiny child in faded red. So flat is the littoral we should not guess the sea was so near, if behind the russet vineyards, the feathery tamarisk bushes, it did not throw up white, beseeching arms.

We are already in St. Dominic's country; and as he saw it in the thirteenth century, so, little changed, we see it in the twentieth. To-day, indeed, it has railways; it is no longer called Languedoc, but Hérault, Aude, Ariège; its government has changed many times; the land now belongs to, and is cultivated by, the people; its strongholds are in ruins; old towns have increased, or disappeared, while a few new ones have sprung up here and there; but two things remain, and given these and the mediæval customs of which so many still prevail among the peasantry, it is easy to-day to see St. Dominic's country as he saw it long ago. Its beauty, and the character of its people, are still unchanged. Their spirit of independence (in which in the thirteenth century they differed so greatly from the men of Northern France); their fierce, smouldering passions, too easily excited; their quickly-roused, quickly-dying enthusiasm—"*feu de paille*"—for a great religious or social cause; their apparent incapacity to bring their lives into line with the spirit of their religion; and, last and saddest, the general indifference as to religion at all;—all these things were the same then as now. The modern spirit of independence at any price, of indifferentism, was rampant among the people of Midi in the thirteenth century, as it is throughout Europe to-day. More hopeless material out of which to form a society to combat the soul-destroying Albigensian heresy can scarcely be conceived. Proud, hasty,

impatient of control, the people of the Midi, deceived by the false asceticism of the heresiarchs, hotly resented enlightenment and instruction. Anxious at the same time to save their souls finally with as little trouble as might be, they greedily accepted the poisonous Catharist doctrines; lived as "*Croyants*" not only without the Sacraments and in the neglect of all religious duties, but with a laxity impossible to their Catholic neighbours bound to confession and penitence. Scarcely a nominal death-bed repentance would be demanded of them—to receive, dying, the *Consolamentum* was all that was required to ensure eternal salvation. Nothing could be easier or more in accordance with the desires of the natural man—and the Midi was very "natural" indeed in the thirteenth century. Yet from this seemingly impossible material were formed many of the first members of the Order of Preachers. For the Faith in Languedoc and Provence was not dead, not even dying, but dormant. St. Dominic knew and understood this as he knew and understood the people of the Midi, their virtues as well as their faults. Without this knowledge, humanly speaking, his mission would have been a failure.

We find him, then, in the summer of 1205, on the road to Béziers, a magnificent fortress-town, a couple of leagues from which the first Conference with the heretics was to be held in the Castle of Servian.

Etienne de Servian, the seigneur of this stronghold, a powerful vassal of the young Count of Béziers, Raymond Roger Trencavel (nephew of Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse), openly favoured the heretics by all the means in his power. He not only protected two of the most powerful heresiarchs, but did his best to proselytise. Of these two men, Baudoin and Thierry, we know that the former was, according to Catharist usage, the *socius* or companion of the latter, who was an apostate priest with a very bad record—"a son of perdition and food for eternal fire," says Pierre de Vaux-Cernay, who knew him. Formerly Dean of the Cathedral Chapter of Nevers, he had in 1199 been denounced

BÉZIERS: CATHEDRAL OF ST. NAZAIRE, AND OLD BRIDGE ACROSS THE ORB

SERVIAN

for heresy and condemned by an episcopal council at Sens, where he was deprived of his high dignity. For a time he hid himself, changing his Christian name of Guillaume to that of Thierry, and finally took refuge with Etienne, *Châtelain* of Servian. "The inhabitants of the town," says Vaux-Cernay, "showed the greatest veneration for this sectary so much cleverer and more cunning than his fellows. They were proud to have him among them, as accomplice and leader."

Servian was thus one of the principal strongholds of heresy, which accounts for its being the place chosen by the Legates in which to begin their new mission. Except that it was then dominated by the great castle, long since ruined, while to-day it is crowned by the scarcely less fortress-like fourteenth-century Church of St. Michael, whose massive lofty tower is a landmark for leagues around, Servian has changed but little since St. Dominic's day. Built upon a high hill "isolated in the midst of a vast, vineyard-clad plain," it commanded, from the castle ramparts, the whole of the surrounding country. At the bottom of the hill it was ringed with fortifications, a great part of which still remains, built into the houses, few of which are of later date than the sixteenth, and those nearer the castle of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The place, like all hill-towns of the Midi, is built for defence; the streets are steep as stairways, and not one is straight; all are narrow, and so curved that even if the outer fortifications were stormed—and Simon de Montfort did prepare to storm them—the assailants must necessarily ascend slowly and with difficulty, thus giving the archers in the castle above a chance of shooting them down by twos and threes as they turned the corners. From the top of the hill the view is very fine. To the north rise the Southern Cevennes; to the south the flat, green country melts into the invisible Mediterranean, while on the west tower the summits of the Eastern Pyrenees, behind the Corbières and the hill-country of beautiful Aude, where the heresy had taken root so firmly that it seemed useless and hopeless to try to destroy it.

"When from the heights of the ramparts these zealous

preachers were descried, slowly and painfully climbing the hill with bleeding feet, and without any equipage of state; when it was known that these men were the Legates of the Holy See, with a Bishop and a dignitary of one of the most illustrious churches of Spain, who came as poor as Christ Himself had been on earth, to evangelise Servian, the strange sublimity of such a sight disarmed the people." Ignorant, easily moved, they welcomed the Catholic apostles, and not all the hostility and ill-will of the *Châtelain* and his friends the heresiarchs could prevent them from crowding to hear them preach. Nor could Etienne de Servian refuse to allow the public arguments or "Conferences," on which such great value was set by the Legates, to be held publicly in the great hall of the Castle. Here the truths of the Catholic Faith were set forth before all the people by one of the missionaries, and the Catharist errors and falsehoods refuted. The heretics in their turn replied, and the conference daily closed with a series of questions and answers not unlike that introduced into Catholic missions in recent years. The greater number of the people, as was invariably the case, had fallen into heresy through ignorance; the fatal ignorance which, except in the case of those utterly indifferent, had led them to attribute genuine sanctity to those false ascetics, the Albigensian chiefs, whose lives outwardly formed so strong a contrast with those of too many of the clergy, careless, faulty, and in many cases, openly sinful. Like all heretics, they argued "from the individual to the institution."

For a week the people of Servian crowded to the Conferences, and before the eight days were over the whole town had declared for the Catholic Faith. It needed all the influence of the seigneur himself to keep them from chasing Baudoin and Thierry from their midst. "Everywhere it would have been the same, everywhere the Church would have triumphed among the people—ignorant, doubtless, but loyal and sincere—had not the knights and *bourgeois* prevented them from returning to their allegiance."

During the last conference, Thierry said to the Bishop of

Osma, who had conducted it: "I know what spirit speaks in you; it is the spirit of Elias."[1] To which Don Diego replied: "And the spirit who speaks in you is that of anti-Christ." Unhappily the people feared Etienne de Servian too much to return in a body to the fold. They were, after all, entirely in his power. But the entire population accompanied the Legates when they left the town at least a league on the way to Béziers, where the next Conference was to be held. The example had been given, a great impression made, but from the good seed sown no immediate harvest had been reaped. It was not until 1210 that Etienne de Servian was publicly reconciled at the Abbey of St. Thibéry of Agde, in the presence of Simon de Montfort, and, possibly, of St. Dominic.

The modern pilgrim to Servian will probably go by the light railway from Béziers, a journey which takes about forty-five minutes. The little train winds its way round a succession of low vine-clad hills, steadily though gradually ascending, and soon, across a wide undulating plain, rises the tower-crowned rock of Servian. Walking from the station up the narrow streets which lead through the ancient walls into the town, I found myself, after ten minutes' steep climb, on the steps of the grand old church.

When one makes a pilgrimage in honour of any particular Saint, it is extraordinary how that Saint sends one to the right places to see, and the right people to give necessary information! In villages, as a rule, it is best to go straight to the *Curé* of the parish, where often one's letters of introduction will be found unnecessary. He invariably knows the history of his church and parish, is often an antiquarian, and is most kind in imparting his knowledge and in giving one letters or introductions to *savants*, local or otherwise, who in their turn generously contribute information and details which it would have been impossible in any other way to gain. It is, moreover, an interesting fact that scarcely a man, woman, or child

[1] The doctrine of the transmigration of souls was one of the chief Catharist tenets.

among the peasantry of the Midi but knows something—vaguely it may be—more or less definite of the history of his beautiful country. One could scarcely say the same of the ordinary English villager! Again and again the traveller is struck by this, in the most unlikely people. A peasant turning the corner of a ploughed field behind a yoke of gentle mouse-coloured oxen will stop politely, and learnedly discourse, in answer to a question, upon the road by which Simon de Montfort and his Crusaders passed to victory in 1209. An old white-coiffed woman will sometimes turn out to be a veritable mine of local history, and I met the ideal old woman at Servian.

I found her on the steps, a huge basket on her arm, apparently waiting for me, as I came out of the great dark church and asked her the way to the castle ruins. She wore the round flat lace coif of the district, with its black velvet band over her thick snowy hair; a white shawl crossed over her neat black dress and big cotton apron. Her face was still beautiful, her eyes were large, dark, and extremely intelligent. When she told me that she had lived in Servian all her life—her name, she said, was Marie Dupleix[1]—and that she knew all about the castle, and would show it to me willingly, I knew St. Dominic had sent her. Down a short narrow street opposite the church she led me, a street whose tall dark houses still retained here and there traces of the colouring of ancient frescoes; where a length of exquisite moulding was built in between a couple of great bare stones, with a tiny mediæval shrine in an angle of the wall; grand old houses now let out in tenements and single rooms to the crowding population. At the end was a wide space, the road curved sharply downhill to the left, and before us stood an enormous nondescript pile of masonry.

"This is the castle," said Marie Dupleix. A fringe of cottages, contrived out of the materials of the ruins, completely surrounded it. Huge blocks of stone were visible behind rabbit-coops and wire chicken-runs; rough wooden

[1] The name has been altered.

porches and gateways half concealed the broken walls. The castle had been pulled down to within a few feet of the ground, and out of the rooms still remaining, and the waste material, small houses had been made. Even these were ancient. "Madame would like to see one? I know the people who live here," said my guide, opening a little door in a rough wooden barricade and escorting me up a steep and slippery path. From the open doorway at the top a fair-faced pleasant woman came to meet us, and Marie explained what I wanted. The woman begged us to come in. "Of the two rooms here," she explained, "one is of the ancient *château,* and this kitchen is built of its stones. In the old times the Seigneur Simon de Montfort came to Servian, but probably Madame is aware of that." The kitchen was a white-washed, spotlessly clean room with an ancient flagged floor, doubtless that of the castle. A black pot hung from a hook above a bright wood fire on the cheerful open hearth. An old dresser stood in a recess, gay with brilliantly painted china decorated with neat bows of scarlet ribbon.

"This," said my hostess, opening an inner door, "is a room of the old *château*, which remained among the ruins. It is now my bedroom. The beams of the roof, Madame will remark, are very ancient." Indeed they were, huge and massive under their coating of whitewash, and the deep latticed window opposite was set in a wall at least 5 feet thick.

"The blessed St. Dominic was also at Servian," remarked Marie Dupleix. "Madame is making a pilgrimage in honour of the Saint, and I am going to take her to our neighbours, next door, who will be able to show her even more."

"In that case," said the pleasant-faced woman, "I will accompany you with Madame's permission." We descended the path after profuse apologies on my part for disturbing my hostess at her dinner-hour. That, she said, was nothing. My time was limited, and the meal could wait! They led me down the hill, round the corner of the group of buildings, and looking up I saw that on this side at least, an upper storey

had been left. The great blocks of stone seemed to grow out of the rock which rose high above us. The ground floor, protected by a low parapet and shadowed by a vine pergola, was about a dozen feet above the road; and beneath the pergola was piled a number of great wine casks. The small pointed windows above were filled in roughly with bricks or wood. "That was surely the chapel!" I exclaimed. "So it is said," replied my guide, "but who knows? *M. le propriétaire*, who is good-hearted, will doubtless allow Madame to ascend." We turned back to the entrance of what was beyond a doubt the actual fabric of the castle. A third woman appeared, to whom the two others eagerly explained my errand, and who proceeded to call her husband. The whole family—several big boys and girls—were at their noon-day meal, but would listen to no apologies. The entire party escorted me into a vast apartment—evidently the great hall of the castle, in which the Conferences were held. It was very dark, the windows had all been walled up, and the only light penetrated through the open wooden door which led on to the parapet already seen from below. This door was half blocked with wine casks, which partly filled the great hall, with its lofty roof crossed with mighty beams black with age. Two or three of the party had brought candles, which threw a flickering light upon the mysterious dark recesses of the shadowy roof. "We use it to store our wine and wood," said the owner. "Not long ago came a great *savant*—an anti-quarian, and he too said that this was once the great hall of the *château*."

Then St. Dominic had stood in this very room! "The Seigneur Simon de Montfort took this town," continued the man; "as for the blessed St. Dominic, I do not know." "It was most likely in this very hall," I told him, "that St. Dominic first preached to the heretics!"

Then they all crowded round as I told the story of the opening of his mission; how the heresiarchs had lodged here, in this very castle; how they had been confuted by St. Dominic and his friends, and how the people had openly acknowledged the

true faith. There we stood on the earthen floor, among the huge wine casks, a prosaic little group of twentieth-century people beneath the timbered roof which 700 years before had echoed the voices of the Apostle of Languedoc and the Bishop of Osma, of Blessed Peter of Castelnau, of Baudoin and Thierry. It was almost impossible to realise it.

Marie Dupleix the indefatigable whispered something to *M. le propriétaire*. "If Madame cares to take the trouble to mount," he said doubtfully, "there is not much to see, and it is very dark, but I will show her the room above this." We turned back through the long dark passage which led to the old hall, climbed a little wooden staircase, and passing through a couple of small bedrooms, about which, I was told, there was "nothing interesting," we entered a second long room, almost pitch dark, evidently used to store hay, of which it was half-full. The candles carried by the children lighted dimly the low walls, the delicate tracery of the bricked-up windows, the massive beams which crossed the room some 10 feet from the floor, one of which might well have served to support the Rood. The air was fragrant and heavy with the smell of hay. Formerly, said the man, there was an entrance from without, where the ground was higher, at the side. Madame would perceive that the beams were very ancient. They were those of the old *château*. This and the hall below had never been destroyed. "Here too is something of interest," he added, and picking my way over a mound of hay I followed him, candle in hand, into a small stone cell, opening near the end of the room out of the right-hand wall. "I have sometimes thought," he said, "that if our hayloft were the chapel, this was the sacristy. In my life-time an old stone statue of the Blessed Virgin was found here. I do not know what became of it, but here is the niche in which it evidently stood." In the wall just opposite the doorway, was indeed a roughly-carved niche about 3 feet high, in such a position as to leave little doubt an altar had once stood beneath it. Traces of carving were still visible at the foot. Was it the Lady Chapel? And if so, had not

St. Dominic surely stood in this very spot? For although the chapel had probably been desecrated by heretic hands we can scarcely doubt he found his way here. The candles lit up the bare walls, still bearing traces of whitewash, a few broken fragments of carved stone lying in a corner, the circle of interested faces in the doorway. . . .

We turned back into the old chapel. The piles of hay and the wondering peasants disappeared for a moment; darkness gave way before the dim light falling through the painted windows, before the glimmer of the little lamp before the Blessed Sacrament. High from the Rood above gazed down shadowy Figures; the time-stained walls were bright with frescoes; the heavy cobwebs were silken hangings; there stood the altar rich in cloth of gold. These things were before the time of St. Dominic, but they had been. . . .

"Madame," said my ideal old woman, when we were once more in the street, "you must not go without seeing some of the old houses here. There is also a staircase of carved stone, old as the castle itself, without a doubt. It all lies on the way to the breach made in the wall by the Seigneur Simon de Montfort, which you must certainly see."

Alas! the carved stone staircase, which she showed me by the simple process of pushing aside the curtain which hung in the open doorway and leading me inside, was, though lovely enough, pure Renaissance. She was, however, so certain that the Blessed St. Dominic must have come to see it as one of the sights of Servian, that I had not the heart to undeceive her! Besides, I doubt if she would have believed me.

Down at the foot of the hill, where a long street of tumble-down houses was built against the old walls, she showed me with great pride the breach made by Simon de Montfort in 1209, where on 21st July, on his way to Béziers, he presented himself and his army before the little town, from which its *Châtelain* and the two heresiarchs had fled, and whose garrison speedily surrendered the castle.

"Madame," said Marie Dupleix, as I took a grateful

farewell of her on the little bridge outside the town, "I am only an old woman, and not learned, but it has been for me a great joy to show you all the sights of Servian, particularly the beautiful staircase. If ever you come here again, ask for me; all the town knows me. You have told me much about St. Dominic which I did not know before." "He sent you to me," I said, looking down at her sweet old face. She laid her wrinkled hand on my sleeve. "For the Blessed St. Dominic I have the greatest veneration," she said, and then looking up deprecatingly—almost guiltily—added: "but the Saint I love best is the Blessed St. Antony of Padua, whose picture is in the church." I had seen it there, a large and beautiful reproduction of Feuerstein's exquisite painting. "I ask him for everything; he is like a friend, he does everything for me," she said earnestly.

"And for me!" I told her as we parted.

III

VERFEIL AND THE MISSION IN THE LAURAGUAIS

After leaving Servian the Legates and their friends held Conferences at Béziers and Carcassonne with little apparent result. In June 1205, at the close of the mission in the latter city, they divided, in order to reach as many towns and villages of the Toulousain and Lauraguais districts as possible. Peter of Castelnau returned to Provence, while the Bishop of Osma and St. Dominic went directly to Verfeil.

This ancient castle, in the midst of its little feudal town, was situated in the Montagne Noire, on the direct road between Toulouse and Lavaur, and about half-way between these cities. From the days when St. Bernard preached there (1147), it had been celebrated as a nest of heresy. The great Cistercian himself had laboured in vain there. The castle was strongly fortified, and noted for the spirit and high degree of military training of the large body of knights, vassals of the Seigneur of Verfeil, more than a hundred of whom "had here a suitable dwelling with sufficient out-buildings to lodge their men-at-arms and stable their war-horses." On this account St. Bernard thought it necessary when he arrived in the Midi to go first to Verfeil, believing that if he could succeed in making converts there he would find it much easier to contest the heresy in other places, so great was its reputation among the sectaries.

"As soon as he arrived in the town, the Saint invited all the people to meet him in the church, and there preached the truth to them with all the authority which his great eloquence and well-known character could lend to his burning words. But scarcely had he begun to preach when the

nobles arose in a body, and violently and with much noise left the sacred building. Full of holy zeal, St. Bernard followed the crowd into the market-place, for the people had followed the nobles and the church was left empty. Here he again began to preach, and again the knights and chief sectaries withdrew, but this time the people seemed disposed to listen. This, however, they were not permitted to do, for from all the houses around arose so deafening a din that not a word which the preacher uttered could be heard."

St. Bernard, indignant, shook the dust of the place from his feet, crying to his cowardly enemies: "You also are but dust, and unto dust will you return." Then, making his way out of the town, he stretched his hand towards it, exclaiming: "Verfeil, may God wither thee!"[1] and so departed.

All the wrath of God, we are told, descended upon the unhappy town — war, pestilence and famine; but these things, instead of changing the hearts of the people, only caused them to cling more obstinately to their errors. Such as they were in the days of St. Bernard, such sixty years later Don Diego and St. Dominic found the people of Verfeil.

They probably followed the old Roman road from Carcassonne to Toulouse as far as Castelnaudary, thence branching off by Revel and St. Felix de Caraman in the Montagne Noire. (St. Dominic's presence in the latter town has been questioned, but there is little doubt that he passed through it, if not in 1205, in 1211, on his way to Lavaur.) The news of their coming had been noised abroad in the country round Verfeil, and the people were eagerly looking forward to the Conferences. "This time, however, far from declining the struggle, Pons Jourdain, Arnauld Arrufat, and many of the cleverest and most wily heretics hastened to sustain it."

The principal subject under discussion was that Catharist doctrine which taught that Our Lord had no actual human body, only its semblance (since all matter was essentially

[1] "*Deus dessiccet te.*" (Verfeil, *viridium folium*=*verte-feuille*=green leaf.)

sinful), and that this had been "left in the air" at His Ascension. The Bishop of Osma preached from St. John iii. 13. "No man hath ascended into Heaven but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man Who is in Heaven." But in spite of his searching questions, of the obvious logic of his demonstration of revealed truth, the heretics persisted so obstinately in their fatal errors, advancing arguments to support them only less ludicrous than blasphemous that the two missionaries were finally compelled to give up their hopeless task, Don Diego remarking that it was at least clear that the people of Verfeil had no common-sense! Most probably the preachers, like St. Bernard, were constrained to depart, shaking its dust from their feet.

This Conference, then, from one standpoint, was an absolute failure. St. Dominic and the good Bishop might well have been discouraged. But in their history there is no trace of this. Their mission was but beginning; it was necessary that it should be deeply marked with the sign of the cross. Not of course that they were to blame for their want of success, though in their humility they doubtless admitted it at every fresh rebuff. The fault was in the blindness and hardness of heart of those who would not hear.

Six years later Simon de Montfort besieged and reduced the castle of Verfeil, and bestowed it on Foulques, Bishop of Toulouse. This prelate restored it, banishing the Catharist chiefs, who "continued to deceive the people." However, the Divine malediction "ceased not to weigh heavy upon the unhappy town." Puy-Laurens tells us that in his childhood he had seen at Toulouse one of the old knights of Verfeil living in absolute poverty, having nothing to ride but a miserable broken-down horse instead of the splendid charger of which he had been so proud in the days of his prosperity.

The mission of 1205–6 was a long and weary one. We find Don Diego and St. Dominic, now joined by Brother

Raoul, "going barefoot from castle to castle and begging their bread from door to door," happy if they were not laden with abuse, and if snares and odious traps were not set for them. The story of the heretic who fastened straws to St. Dominic's habit, thinking to make him look ridiculous, is well known, and such things continually happened. Winter in Languedoc is remarkable for its cold, cutting winds, which blow for days together from the mountains; the villages were generally hostile; the roads were tracks, knee-deep in mud in bad weather. Again and again the missionaries had not where to lay their heads—and the Bishop was an old man who had never been used to great exterior hardships;—food and drink were often denied them, and coarse jokes were continually played at their expense. The sense of personal reverence for their priestly dignity—a sense never in the South of France and in Italy what it was in the north—was entirely forgotten in hatred for their mission, and that innate cruelty so characteristic of the Midi.

A sixteenth-century chronicler tell us the following story[1] which belongs to this part of St. Dominic's mission. Being about to visit in company with "several prelates and doctors" a place hitherto unknown to them, where a Conference was to be held, they all mistook their way, and "came to a place where two roads met, so that they knew not which to take. And lo! as they discussed this among themselves, in their company was concealed . . . a heretic who, in the guise of a very Christian, journeyed with them and was very sad (*moult triste*) that so honourable a brigade of clerics were coming to this disputation, fearing that by them the heretics' foolish opinions would be confounded, which indeed happened. This man, seeing that they questioned among themselves, spoke thus: 'My lords, if you will follow me I will promise to put you into the straightest and shortest way, which immediately will lead you to the town whither you are bound.' The said lords hearing

[1] See Balme, *Cart. I.*, pp. 101–3. *La légende de Monseigneur St. Dominique Père et premier Fondateur de l'Ordre des Frères Prescheurs, translatée du Latin en François, par Vénérable réligieux et prescheur excellent, frère Jehan Martin dudit Ordre, et du convent de Valenchènes.*

this, and esteeming him to be a good Catholic, said Yea; and thus the disloyal knave maliciously seduced and deceived them, for he led them into a wood in which they immediately found themselves without road or footpath. Then were they forced with bare feet to travel over bushes and briars and thorns. And the false heretic, being well-shod, was not wounded, but in his heart had deep joy. The great Seigneurs, however, had much ado to get forward, and were in much anguish on account of the sharp-pointed thorns which tore them so that their limbs streamed with blood. Which, when that true friend of God, Dominic, saw it, in all patience he began joyfully to sing (*se print à chanter joyeusement*) *Te Deum laudamus.*

"The which canticle ended he spoke thus: 'My very dear masters, rejoice in Our Lord, for I have firm faith that we shall obtain the victory over the enemies of truth. I clearly see help from Heaven descending upon us; but first let us be purged from our sins, for which we shall be pardoned on account of the blood we have shed to-day. And for this have good cheer and be not careful, for this evil fortune and tribulation signifies triumph and glory to come. Remember Him who said: "*cum ipso sum in tribulatione*"—"I am with him in tribulation"; and in another place: "*Juxta est Dominus his qui tribulato sunt corde*"—"God is near to those of a sorrowful heart." And thus, since we have God with us, we should not doubt but that we shall conquer and confound the wicked and perverse heretics.'

"Hearing this, the false and disloyal knave, who all this time was causing them to wander in the desert, seeing the marvellous constancy of St. Dominic and his patience, threw himself upon the ground, crying for mercy for the wicked and fraudulent deception which he had made them suffer in such great pains, publicly confessing that he was a heretic, and one of those with whom they were going to dispute, but from this hour promised to deny and abandon all false opinions, and pledged himself to bring them back to the right road, and to lead them directly to the town to which he had pretended to guide them.

"When St. Dominic and those who were with him heard this, they were greatly consoled, hoping by the aid of Jesus Christ that, as they had already converted one heretic, they should, when they had rested, convert many more. Which thing indeed came to pass, for the unbelievers were confounded by the truth of their arguments, which caused them great sorrow of heart, but to the loyal Christians was a matter of great joy."

Another touching story, related by a contemporary writer, which, like the preceding, forms the subject of one of Père Besson's beautiful frescoes at San Sisto (Rome), and which has been thought by some of the Saint's biographers to have occurred 1209–10, may well be related here, as its date cannot certainly be fixed. It took place in the neighbourhood of Albi, and one authority suggests that St. Dominic was at the time on pilgrimage to Notre Dame de la Drêche.

"During one of his apostolic journeys the Man of God was crossing a river (the Tarn) in a boat, and the boatman asked a *denier*[1] for the passage. 'I am a disciple and servant of Christ,' answered Dominic, 'I carry with me neither gold nor silver, but for your service I promise you the kingdom of Heaven.' The boatman, discontented with this answer, and growing very excited, insisted rudely, and roughly pulling his cloak, cried: 'Either leave me your cloak or give me my money!' Dominic raised his eyes to Heaven, and stood silent for a moment; then looking down on the ground, and seeing a piece of money which Providence had assuredly just placed there, he said to the man: 'There is what you ask! take it, and let me go in peace.'" This miracle, adds B. Humbert de Romans, reminds us of that wrought for St. Peter, who found the tribute-money in the mouth of the fish he had just caught.

In 1206 we have definite record that St. Dominic visited Villeneuve-le-Comtal, where he "reconciled" a little girl of ten, named Saura. This child, who had been a "clothed

[1] Originally one-twelfth of a *sou*. Three *deniers Parisis* were worth four *deniers Tournois*. The value of the *denier* was about a penny.

heretic" for three years, lived with a well-known *Parfaite*, a woman named Alazaïs. Saura's mother, after entering the sect, had taken refuge in the stronghold of Montségur, whither, some years later, her daughter's husband, shoemaker and simple Christian, did not hesitate to follow and plead with her, with a courage which was rewarded by her conversion and reconciliation. Saura, we are told, persevered to the end.

Such, imperfectly recorded by the ancient chroniclers, are the fragments which remain to us of the history of the first year of St. Dominic's mission, of which the story of the wandering among thorns is so apt a symbol.[1] His tender heart was moved by the spiritual misery and degradation of the people; the very discouragements which met him at every turn only incited him to fresh exertions; his whole soul was in his work. Convinced as he was that he was called to minister to those lost and wandering sheep, he spared neither tears nor blood for their salvation. What form, beyond his personal active apostolate this mission was to take was not yet plain; not yet was the clear vision granted to him of the great white-robed family of sons and daughters of which he was to be the Father and Founder. He waited, and hoped. But, as the winter days lengthened into the spring of 1206, and spring blossomed into summer; as the Legates and missionaries travelled from their outposts to meet once more at Carcassonne before the conference at Montréal, the hour rapidly approached in which there was to be given to him the unmistakable revelation of the Sign of God from Heaven.

[1] Some authorities place the mission to Mas Stes. Puelles within this period. It could not have taken place before Feb. 5, 1206, the date on which Bp. Foulques took possession of his Cathedral of Toulouse, as we are specially told that he and St. Dominic evangelised Mas Stes. Puelles together.

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IV

MONTRÉAL OF THE MIRACLES AND ITS WAYSIDE SHRINES

Of all the places in Languedoc hallowed by the presence of St. Dominic, none, with the exception of Prouille and Fanjeaux, is richer in memories of him than Montréal. True, its fortress-church dates only from the last quarter of the thirteenth century, when it replaced the ancient building in which the Saint had so often preached, but, as is so frequently the case with these fortified hill-villages of the Midi, the place itself is little changed; the streets and roads through which he passed are still the same, though the fortifications and the castle have long disappeared. Montréal, situated on the high road which led from Catalonia, by way of St. Lizier and Mirepoix to Béziers, and thence to Provence, is about half-way between Carcassonne and Fanjeaux; and during the countless journeys of St. Dominic between these two important strongholds, both so dear to his heart, and to each of which he was for a time officially bound, he naturally passed through Montréal. At a little moss-grown fountain outside the town, still called St. Dominic's Fountain, he was accustomed to shelter for a while from the scorching summer sun, or the keen, icy winter wind. It is the first of the three shrines on the highroad which commemorate the passage of the Saint, and naturally the most ancient.

At least three of St. Dominic's miracles are connected with Montréal, of which the first is known as the Miracle of the Sheaves. On the Feast of St. John the Baptist, 24th June 1206, the three Legates, accompanied by the Bishop of

Osma, St. Dominic, and twelve Cistercian abbots, who had answered the appeal of the Abbot of Citeaux, left Carcassonne early to walk barefoot to Montréal, where one of the most important Conferences of their spiritual Crusade was to be held. On the way, about three miles from their destination, they passed a field beside the dusty, shadeless road, where the early harvest was being gathered in. St. Dominic, the first to perceive the reapers (who belonged to the parish of Arzens), rebuked them sternly for working on a holy-day. The men assumed a threatening attitude, and one, standing ready to strike him with his sickle, answered defiantly that it was no holy-day, that the corn must be reaped, and that they intended to do it without interference from any priest. Looking down, the man suddenly perceived the sheaf he held in his hand was red with blood. "He thought at first he had cut himself with his reaping-hook, but there was no wound in his hand. 'What can it be?' he asked the other peasants. Then, all, hastily examining their sheaves, found them also stained with blood, though their hands were scatheless. God doubtless permitted this prodigy for the greater glory of His servants in this region, particularly for that of Blessed Dominic." It is interesting to note in this connection that St. John the Baptist was held in horror by the heretics, who looked upon him as an evil spirit and antichrist. The spot on which the miracle occurred is to-day marked by a small wayside shrine, erected in 1888 by the V. R. Fr. Larocca, Master-General of the Dominican Order, and blessed on 8th October of the same year by the Bishop of Carcassonne, in commemoration of the undying tradition of the "Field of the Sheaves." A large picture of the miracle hangs in the Parish Church of Montréal.

The shrine stands on the left of the roadside going towards Montréal, on a low bank which forms a tiny promontory just where a field-track turns off from the highroad. The pilgrim of to-day crosses a dry ditch, makes his way through a broken hawthorn hedge, and kneels at the foot of a stone cross, on the pedestal of which is sculptured in high relief a

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

THE WAYSIDE SHRINE OF THE "CHAMP DES EPIS," ON THE ROAD TO MONTRÉAL

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

THE WAYSIDE SHRINE OF "L'ORAGE," ON THE ROAD TO MONTRÉAL

representation of St. Dominic threatening the reapers with the wrath of heaven.

A few hundred yards further on, on the other side of the road, is another shrine commemorating a miracle of later date which took place on one of St. Dominic's many journeys between Montréal and Carcassonne. It is known as the Miracle of the Storm.[1] The Saint was preaching one sultry afternoon to a group of peasants working in the surrounding fields and vineyards, when the muttering of thunder was heard, the heavy sky grew dark with clouds, and began to pulse with lightning. One of the sudden, terrible storms which so often destroyed a harvest in half an hour was about to break. His hearers implored Dominic to pray that the tempest might be averted. He bade them not to fear, for not a hair of their heads would be wet with the rain, which had begun to fall in torrents a little way off, and that none of their crops should suffer from it. They remained till his sermon was finished, and departed, untouched by the storm, to find that the Saint's prophecy had been fulfilled, and that their fields had taken no harm. According to local tradition, no rain has fallen ever since on the spot, now marked by a tall cross surmounting a shrine, round which is planted a little grove of cypress and yew.

Nearly opposite this monument, on the other side of the road, is an avenue of limes leading up to the great farm on the hillside, close to which, at the edge of a little wood, is the fountain of St. Dominic—so popular in the neighbourhood that it is not to-day merely a place for pilgrimage, but an extremely common resort for picnics! The owner has placed wooden benches and a rustic table at the edge of the little pond, with its trellis bridge, which is fed by the overflow of the fountain. Here among the rocks, green with moss and ivy, the water of the spring bubbles up in a great square stone cistern, behind a latticed opening surmounted by an old white stone statue of St. Dominic, which in spring is

[1] Other miracles of a like nature are related of St. Dominic, and also of other saints, notably St. Antony of Padua.

wreathed in trails of flowering periwinkle. It is perhaps one of the most beautiful, though one of the least known, Holy Wells in the world. Here Dominic and his companions would turn aside from the dusty road to rest by the fountain beneath the spreading trees, and there slake their thirst; "for," says Gérard de Frachet, "when the Saint, weary and harassed with cares, was going to stay in a house belonging to seculars, he first drank deeply at some fountain or neighbouring spring, fearing lest his thirst, increased by the fatigue of the journey, should scandalise his hosts. For his liveliest fear was ever that he might become an occasion of scandal to those around him; this he dreaded above all." The ice-cold water —to which have often been ascribed miraculous properties— is still as deliciously fresh and clear as it was in the time of our Saint, springing from the heart of the limestone rock.

A turn of the road and Montréal comes into view dominating the illimitable plain, all rugged with low hills. Here, hot and weary, St. Dominic entered for the first time with the Legates on that eventful 24th July 1206, to take part in a Conference which was to last fifteen days. As was usually the case, it was held in the great hall of the castle.

The *Châtelain* of Montréal was, in 1206, that famous Amaury (or Almeric), who perished so miserably in 1211 at the siege of Lavaur with his sister, Giraude, a professed Catharist, and a woman of evil life. Under their patronage, heresy and its fatal practices had free course at Montréal. As at Servian, the seigneur set the example, frequented the heretic gatherings in the houses of the *Parfaits*, both male and female, and "adored" his hosts with the rest of the assembly. For the *Parfaits* here "kept house publicly." The place was another stronghold of heresy; "the Catholic Church was deserted, or only frequented by the poor, who were disdained by the nobles and the *bourgeois*."[1] The people, at least, were loyal at heart.

[1] It is notable that among the records of the Inquisition, in the lists of those who professed Catharist doctrines, it is rare that the name of a peasant or workman occurs.—P. BALME.

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

THE FOUNTAIN OF ST. DOMINIC, NEAR MONTRÉAL

At the news of a solemn Conference at Montréal crowds flocked to the town, chief among whom were four heresiarchs, Arnauld and Pons Jourdain of Verfeil, the celebrated Guilabert de Castres of Fanjeaux, a most active and influential *Parfait*, and a certain Benoît de Termes, "deacon" for the district of Carcassonne, the castellated walls of which city were clearly visible from the ramparts of Montréal. "Many other heretics," says Guillaume de Puy-Laurens, "whose names are not written in the Book of Life, had come to support their masters."

The Catholic champions were the three Papal Legates, the Cistercian abbots, and the two Spanish dignitaries. For a couple of weeks the missionaries preached, fervently exhorting the Catholics to be true to their faith; while doctrinal Conferences were held every evening with the Catharist leaders in presence of an immense and eager crowd. Four arbiters were chosen —all heretics—two knights, two *bourgeois*, to decide which side gained the victory in argument, and the battle was arrayed. Arnauld de Verfeil began the attack, and was at once carried away by abuse of the Holy Roman Church, which he declared to be the church of the devil and all her doctrines equally diabolical. She was Babylon, drunk with the blood of the martyrs and saints of Christ. Neither our Lord nor His apostles had determined the Order of Mass as it was said to-day. He spoke "as centuries later Luther and Calvin were to speak . . . of the Church they had betrayed." The Bishop of Osma replied, proving all his statements from the New Testament. The arguments on both sides were then drawn up in writing, and these *livrets* delivered to the arbiters, from whom both sides were perfectly aware no impartial judgment would be obtained. Daily this was done, after the public discussion, but in the end the four worthies refused to pronounce any opinion at all, for very apparent reasons! They also refused to restore to the Catholics the MSS. containing their arguments, lest, says a contemporary, they should be published among the people. In spite of this, at

least 150 heretics renounced their errors and returned to the true faith.

The Conference over the Chief Legate dispersed the twelve Cistercian abbots to labour in various districts of Languedoc, with certain monks who had accompanied them, bidding them lead "a humble and austere life, as had been shown to them upon the mountain." They were men specially chosen, of notable perfection in holiness, and eminently suited for the work of evangelisation. Among them was Guy de Vaux-Cernay, the future Bishop of Carcassonne, uncle of the Cistercian chronicler and personal friend of St. Dominic. Blessed Peter of Castelnau returned to Provence, and St. Dominic turned his steps towards Fanjeaux (possibly in company with Don Diego), the hill-town, which stood sentinel a few leagues away across the rolling plain.

It was probably during this Conference of 1206 that the Miracle of the Ordeal by Fire took place; but as St. Dominic sustained many other discussions at Montréal, its date cannot certainly be fixed. This miracle must not be confounded with a similar one at Fanjeaux, which happened in July 1206. Modern critics may see in one a mere repetition of the other, but the differences between the two are sufficiently important to make it clear that each was a separate and distinct manifestation, by which God chose to show forth His glory to the heretics, who, except they saw signs and wonders, would not believe. And even supposing the miracle of Montréal to be but a legend arising out of the confusion of this place with Fanjeaux, it is sufficiently important and well authenticated to make it worth recording in its place.

On a certain night when St. Dominic had been replying to the heretics, a number of those men sat round the fire in the house of one of the *Parfaits*, with the book which contained his arguments open before them. "Suppose," said one, "that we put it into the heart of the fire? If it is not burnt we shall know that the Catholic doctrine is true; if not, our own

faith holds good." "For which thing," says a contemporary chronicler, "it was thrown into the fire, whence, having received no hurt, it immediately fell out, at which all were astounded (*esbaïs*). Then said one harder of heart than his fellows: 'Throw it in again, and thus the truth shall more fully be proved.' The which was done again, and a second time it fell out. And anon such an one said: 'Let it be thrown in a third time, and then we shall know without a doubt where the truth lies.' And again thrown into the fire [the book] issued therefrom all whole."

Even this was useless. "The heretics, in spite of these repeated prodigies, would not repent, persevering in their obstinacy." Among themselves they agreed never to speak of the occurrence, and, above all, never to let the Catholics know of it. Nevertheless, a certain knight who had been present, more favourable to the good cause than the others, revealed the miracle openly, says Vaux-Cernay, who had heard the account of the prodigy from one who was present and affirms that it took place at Montréal. "In this," remarks a third chronicler, "manifestly appeared the truth of the Catholic Faith, the holiness of the man of God, and the falseness and perversity of the sectaries."

Montréal from a distance is one of the most picturesque towns in Languedoc, crowned, like Servian, by its imposing fortified church. These cities set on a hill are a distinctive feature of the country, memorials of the time when every village was a stronghold and every church a watch-tower. For Aude and Ariège, and the other departments of ancient Languedoc are but a palimpsest on which, beneath the scarcely dried ink of the "improvements" of the twentieth century, is still distinctly visible, in picturesque, faded characters, the grim and ghastly history of the mediæval civil and religious wars. Montréal, with its grand old church, the slender spire of Fanjeaux, the massive square tower of Villasavary on its low round hill, all tell the same tale of the days when every man's hand was against his fellow,

if not his brother, and his foes were generally his nearest neighbours.

Montréal is seven or eight miles from Prouille—the centre of our pilgrimage—but it is easy to bicycle, drive, or even go (in a roundabout way) by train. It is best, however, to choose the road along which St. Dominic has so often passed; through a little brown hamlet, beyond which stretches an endless succession of low hills clothed with maize and wheat and flowering lucerne, across the railway line to Pamiers, from which a fine new road has been engineered up the hill of Montréal.

The little town is clearly visible almost the whole way, but as we approach it the extraordinarily fine position of this natural fortress becomes more apparent. The church literally towers above the houses, the ascent to which even by the new road is both long and steep. The old road which St. Dominic knew, a mere track on the hillside, is now only used by peasants going to or from their work. It is an old-world place, with some curious ancient houses hidden away in its narrow cobbled streets—a description, however, which might apply to nearly every village in Languedoc. It centres round the church, built of deep red Toulousain brick faced with white stone, its octagonal tower of six storeys pierced as to the two uppermost with large openings on each face. Entering by a fine fifteenth-century porch at the side, incongruous with its delicate tracery upon the massive, enormously thick wall, one is struck by the splendid proportions of the nave and choir. Montréal was formerly a collegiate church with stalls for thirty-four canons. The stalls, with their curiously-carved black oak *misereres*, still exist in the great apse behind the altar—the ancient choir—but the canons are now represented by *M. le Curé*. The church is beautifully kept, clean and fresh; it is built with a single wide, lofty, aisleless nave and a dozen lateral chapels, like the greater number of parish churches in the Midi, many of which—notably that of Quillan—are so dark that it is difficult properly to appreciate

Photo: Célestin Sicard, Montréal

MONTRÉAL: THE OLD ROAD

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

MONTRÉAL: THE PULPIT

their really noble proportions. The church of Montréal, however, is flooded with light, and its walls and graceful pillars are painted and frescoed brilliantly.

M. le Curé, who lives just across the road, is very kind to pilgrims from Prouille, and shows everything there is to be seen, including his fine sacristies, and the celebrated picture of the Miracle of the Sheaves. The parish, he says, is one of the best in the diocese; all who are able attend daily Mass; the church is filled at the Sunday ceremonies; and every evening a sprinkling of people gathers to recite the Rosary. "For," continues *M. le Curé*, "in a parish which is so celebrated in the life of St. Dominic, things would be in a bad way if we neglected that devotion. We say it every evening at 6." "Even in the winter?" asks the pilgrim. "Even in the winter," replies *M. le Curé*, smiling. What he does not say, but what anybody else will tell me, is that the present spiritual state of Montréal is chiefly owing to his own untiring labours during the many years he has been in charge of the parish. His chief treasure, the glory of the church, is the pulpit from which St. Dominic preached. "It is only the floor of the present pulpit and the stairs which lead up to it," he tells me conscientiously, "the rest, and also the stair-rail, is of the fourteenth century. And I assure you that never do I pass up those steps or stand in that pulpit—and I preach twice every Sunday—without thinking of him who stood here before me, whose representative in a sense I am; and of my own entire unworthiness."

I go up the little rough worn wooden steps as one mounts the *Scala Santa*, and kneel on the pulpit floor. There are certain moments, certain experiences, which will not bear description. This is one of them. . . .

"Before you go," says *M. le Curé*, "you must see the view from the Espéron. It is one of the finest in the country—here we say *the finest*."

The Espéron is behind the church, a wide open place full of shrubs and flowering plants, among which stand green seats.

In the midst rises a great crucifix. It is evidently the site of the old castle, for it is flanked by the ramparts. Close to this spot the Conferences were held. "Come to the edge and look over the parapet," says *M. le Curé*. Below us, against the rocky wall, are the roofs of a few scattered houses; a little to the right, perched on its low hill, is the picturesque windmill of La Caussade. Windmills are a very characteristic feature of this part of Languedoc; one finds them outside almost every village. At Fanjeaux there are three, in a row. Beneath the houses fields and vineyards slope sharply down, crossed by the dusty stretch of the road to Carcassonne, on which lie the three shrines. Beyond it, and all around as far as the eye can reach, stretches the glorious plain of Languedoc, rugged with low hills like gigantic waves in mid-ocean, pierced here and there by ridges of grey rock, or islands of solemn cypresses. Distant villages shine white in the afternoon sunshine; here a vinedresser's hut stands solitary, guarded by two tall poplars; every yard of ground is cultivated, so that the whole landscape seems one great garden. The long, low, almost unbroken line of the Montagne Noire rises to the north; to the west is an apparently endless vista of hills; away in the south lies Spain, behind the faint cloudy summits of the Pyrenees. One of the chief glories of this part of the Midi is its magnificent horizons. A view like this, seen in driving rain, or mist, or sunshine, is always infinite in possibilities, with its delicate colouring, indefinite outlines, hazy distances—and therefore infinitely satisfying. A country without horizons is like a man without imagination.

To the pilgrim the thought that every mile of this rolling landscape was known and loved by St. Dominic; that every road, every hill-path, every distant village was traversed by his willing, often weary feet, adds the final charm of association. A couple of leagues away to the left rises the sister-stronghold of Fanjeaux with Villasavary below it; invisible behind that long swell of hill lies Prouille. Behind us are the battlements of Carcassonne, and at the foot of the Montagne Noire nestle

Photo : R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

FANJEAUX, FROM PROUILLE, WITH SIGNADOU (TO THE LEFT), AND CHURCH

Mas Stes. Puelles and Castelnaudary. We are in the very heart of St. Dominic's country here!

"He saw it all, seven hundred years ago, just as you see it to-day," says *M. le Curé*. "It was the country he loved best —on earth," he adds softly, his eyes fixed on the distant horizon.

V

THE SIGNADOU OF FANJEAUX

It was on 9th or 10th July 1206 that St. Dominic mounted for the first time the steep slopes of the hill on which stands Fanjeaux, possibly accompanied by the Bishop of Osma, though of this we cannot be certain. It was the beginning of his independent apostolate. The Legates and Cistercian missionaries were already scattered throughout Languedoc and Provence.

Fanjeaux, formerly the important Roman station of *Fanum Jovis*, was strongly fortified, possessed a fine castle, and was at that time a hotbed of heresy, being a special haunt of Guilabert de Castres, whom indeed St. Dominic found here on his arrival. Nowhere were more zealous *Parfaits*, both men and women, to be found than at Fanjeaux, for the town was the headquarters of the traffic in children by which their forces were so largely recruited. There were at least ten houses of *Parfaites* here, in which not only young girls, but babies of five and six were received by these women, who maintained and educated their pupils *gratis*, asking in return only one thing—the body and soul of the child.

A very large proportion of these unfortunate children were of noble or gentle birth. Ruin stared in the face of many of the seigneurs of the Midi, whose revenues were exhausted and whose lands had often been confiscated in the endless wars which had for so long been the scourge of the country; to say nothing of the spoliation and persecution which the Catholic landowners and gentry suffered at the hands of the Albigensian faction. A father with a family of daughters was often sorely perplexed as to how to dispose of them.

Without dowries they could neither expect to make suitable marriages, nor to be received as choir-nuns in one of the great convents; and marriage or the cloister were then the only two careers thought possible for a woman. We can scarcely wonder that many such fathers, some sorely against their will, some gladly enough, accepted the offers of the heresiarchs, who in three or four villages had founded "convents,"[1] where the unfortunate children, under the care of the *Parfaites*, were initiated from their earliest years into the Catharist mysteries; and whence they emerged as zealous proselytisers.

The part played by women in the heretic propaganda was enormous. Those of the upper class—such as Esclairmonde de Foix and Guiraude de Montréal—arranged meetings between the leaders, and took an active share in the Albigensian tactics, political as well as social. The peasant women carried messages and acted generally as go-betweens, "unsuspected from their very insignificance." The children often could remember no other care, no other instruction than that of the *Parfaites*. It is to this that we owe such abominations as the "heretication" of a child of five, of another of seven, of countless others of ten and twelve years, to speak only of well-known and published cases. Orphans were the natural prey of these women, who did not hesitate to hide their novices in cellars and secret chambers, pretending they were dead, if their relations appeared to claim them.[2]

To stop, or at least counteract, this wholesale proselytising was St. Dominic's chief desire from the very day of his arrival at Fanjeaux. Yet so wily and cunning were the heretics, so extremely skilful their evasions—for to them

[1] See Appendix A.

[2] See *Cart. I.*, pp. 130–133. One woman handed over to the *Parfaites* her little daughter, receiving back the child's clothes, "in order," said these women, "that you may tell your neighbours that your little girl has passed to a better world; which is indeed the truth, for she is with us, and, hidden in this underground dungeon, is really dead to this world." The unhappy woman followed this advice, and actually paid burial-fees to the priest of the place. However, seven years later the girl escaped, and publicly proclaimed her mother's treachery. She was reconciled to the Faith.

perjury and lies were no sin—that any attempt of the kind was fraught not only with difficulty, but with very real danger. His only resource was prayer. Day and night he stormed Heaven for the means of rescuing these young souls, and of providing them with a refuge to which they might flee when rescued. Meanwhile his first active step was to open a Conference, to which the entire population eagerly flocked. His fame had evidently preceded him. Guillaume de Durfort, the *Châtelain*, who had for long been a *Croyant*, lent the great hall of the castle for the purpose, and into it crowded representatives of all the noble families of Fanjeaux, Albigenses to a man.

The hall was a large, barn-like apartment, with stone floor and walls, its roof crossed by mighty beams. On one side was a huge fire-place, in an open hearth, itself a small room. The same procedure was followed as formerly. Both Catholics and heretics prepared summaries of the doctrines which they believed, and from the former the "*livret*" of St. Dominic was unanimously chosen as being the clearest and most forcibly expressed.[1] The three arbiters, being unable to agree upon the value of the documents submitted to them, decided, as at Montréal—possibly for that very reason—to submit both to the Trial by Fire.

The Ordeal or Judgment of God, both by fire and water, was very common in the thirteenth century, and indeed in far later times, though it was never imposed or even approved by the Church, as being a superstitious practice.[2] The faith of the ignorant often goes hand in hand with superstition; heresy invariably, though unconsciously, does so. "But the power of God is not limited by His creatures; and the Almighty,

[1] This fact goes far to prove that St. Dominic up to this point was not alone. It is, however, possible that the other Catholic disputants were priests of the neighbourhood. No names are given.

[2] See Jaugey, *Dictionnaire d'Apologétique*, art. "*Jugement de Dieu.*" The State, though not the Church, continually practised these *Ordeals*, to arrive at the supposed truth of a case, just as it imposed torture to extort evidence. The trial by water of a woman suspected of witchcraft was in vogue in England until comparatively recent times—the result, it will be remembered, being invariably fatal to the "witch."

intervening miraculously, has often made use of this undesirable practice to show forth His glory and bring about the salvation of souls." "The crude justice of ordeals by fire and water," says a brilliant American writer,[1] "was ennobled by a sublime faith, however distorted. . . . Even in their superstitions the Middle Ages retained a certain sense of sanity."[2]

"A great fire is lighted on the hearth; the two books are thrown into it. In an instant that of the heretic is consumed, and disappears in the glowing embers, while that of the Saint remains intact. Still more wonderful, in the sight of all present it leaps from the flames. Thrown thrice into the fire, thrice it escapes therefrom"—"cast," says an ancient MS. of Prouille, "by the invisible hand of the Most High upon the great beam above the hearth, where it leaves three deep scars of burning, which are still visible, as a perpetual remembrance of so great a miracle." Thus, as the three youths of old were preserved in the burning fiery furnace, Almighty God once more exercised His power to reveal the truth to the blinded eyes of the heretics—in this instance blinder than the heathen. For a greater than Dominic was present, and His unseen form was that of the Son of God.

The hall where this miracle took place was sold in 1346, the year of the battle of Crécy, by the family of De Durfort, to one of their kinsmen, then Provincial of the Dominicans of Toulouse, in order that a chapel might be built on the spot. "Considering," says the deed of sale, "that by virtue from on High a miracle has been wrought by fire in this house in honour of Blessed Dominic and of the Holy Faith . . . desiring with all our hearts that a chapel should be constructed and an altar to Blessed Dominic erected here to the glory of God, of His blessed Mother Mary, of all the Saints, and the monastery[3] of Prouille, we sell," &c. The chapel had

[1] Lucien Johnstone, *The Spirit of Mediævalism* (Catholic University Bulletin, Jan. 1911).

[2] The custom of drawing lots, which belongs to this category of practices, was, after all, in use by the Apostles themselves. (*Cf.* Acts i. 23-26).

[3] The words "monastery" and "convent" are used indifferently in French for religious houses either of men or women. They are so used in English throughout this book.

already been built, for ten days later the Provincial and the Prior of Prouille took possession of it "in the presence of numerous friars and the whole population of Fanjeaux." Two years later the first convent of friars was founded in Fanjeaux, but this building having been destroyed by the Black Prince—the English ravaged the town most cruelly—the convent was rebuilt close to the Chapel of St. Dominic, on a site specially granted by Charles V.[1] It contained a cloister forty-two paces square, of which no traces now remain, though the restored monastery buildings still exist, and form at present the Presbytery of Fanjeaux. To the Chapel of St. Dominic was removed the beam on which the unburnt book had rested, and which had been religiously preserved at Prouille since 1209. It was hung by iron chains from the roof, at a height of 22 feet from the floor. The hearth-stone on which the fire had burnt was also preserved, and sealed beneath the altar. It was the custom of intending postulants of Prouille to come here and kiss this stone on the day preceding their entrance into the convent. At the Revolution, of course, all was confiscated or destroyed; the chapel was razed, and the convent seized by the State; but the beam and stone—being "worthless"—were placed in the Parish Church of Fanjeaux, where they may be seen to-day in one of the north chapels, the latter sealed into the wall beneath the former. Below the beam is the following inscription:

"*Hic e voracibus flammis evangelium liber exiit incolumis*
In Nomine Jesu Domino Jubente."

But though the chapel was destroyed we are able to fix with certainty the site of the miracle. Having been built on the exact spot upon which the hearth originally stood, it opened from a larger chapel, now a barn, to which access was gained not only from the cloister (through St. Dominic's Chapel), but from the street, which winds down to the foot of the hill. Standing in this chapel, facing the cloister, the

[1] In 1277 the Midi had been re-united to the Crown of France.

Photo : R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

THE BEAM OF THE MIRACLE IN THE CHURCH OF FANJEAUX WITH THE HEARTHSTONE SEALED BELOW IT

(To the right of the large pillar)

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Lickert, O.P.

THE SITE OF THE "MIRACLE OF FIRE," AND OF THE CHAPEL OF ST DOMINIC BUILT ON THE SPOT, IN THE PRESBYTERY GARDEN, FANJEAUX

chapel of the Miracle opened to the right, through an ancient arch now walled up, in which is a doorway leading to the presbytery garden. Passing through this door we stand in a wild, overgrown square patch of grass, surrounded by traces of ruined walls, now half-hidden by bushes and brambles.[1] That this was the site of St. Dominic's Chapel was proved beyond a doubt by excavations undertaken in the winter of 1910-11 by the *Curé* of Fanjeaux and the Chaplain of Prouille. Two or three steps to the left lead up to the level of the garden, shady with cypresses, and sweet with violets in spring and autumn, where once stood the cloister, and whence from the southern wall, below which the hill slants downwards abruptly, can be gained a magnificent view of the Pyrenees. The importance of this recent discovery has hardly yet become known or realised.

The convent itself is of pathetic interest, though many of its characteristic features have disappeared. The Friars' Church still remains, opening to the left from the broad entrance corridor; a beautiful building of the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, with lofty pointed arches and slender pillars; now hung with cobwebs, bare, and empty. Here the village children are on great occasions allowed to act little plays, under the supervision of the *Curé*. The ancient Dominican Church is now the parish theatre of Fanjeaux!

At the time of St. Dominic's arrival there seems to have been no parish priest at Fanjeaux. Indeed, not a few of the clergy themselves were tainted with the heresy (some of the more notable heresiarchs were apostate priests), and a very large proportion were ignorant, lukewarm, without courage or zeal. The half-instructed people through ignorance had become indifferent. One "religion" seemed as good as another to them. They were losing the great ideal of Catholicism without knowing how or why. "With the exception of a few prelates no one understood how it was possible for a mere question of faith to 'hate' and persecute his neighbour, his friend, his brother." We find examples of this overruling

[1] 1910. Since then, the site has been cleared. (See picture.)

of the supernatural by the natural law at almost every step of St. Dominic's passage through the Midi. Yet at that time this indifference was an anachronism. Utterly opposed as was the Southern character, unstable and frivolous, to that of the North, the spirit of mediævalism worked in both. The people were idealists, they were children, with a child's idea of the relation between cause and effect. "Catholicity in the Middle Ages was an ideal . . . conception of the relations between God and man . . . by the side of [which] our modern hopeless divisions into warring sects seem no less ridiculous than saddening."[1] It was reserved for a later age to accomplish "that extraordinary feat, hitherto unknown in the world's history, of utterly dissociating religion from public life, and largely from private morals."[2] If the passive indifferentism towards religion which brooded over Southern France in the thirteenth century was but the foreshadowing of the active hatred of to-day there was this difference between the two states: mediæval indifference professed to regard with complacency a heresy such as Manichæism, the very pivot and centre of whose teaching was a denial of the doctrine of the Triune God; that of the present day contemptuously sweeps aside all creeds and dogmas in the determined but vain attempt utterly to ignore Him.

But in the thirteenth century religion was not only the most important thing in the life of the people—it was that life itself. A man's most pressing concern was his eternal salvation, and he was not ashamed that others should know it. Piety was joyous. It was universally understood—and the knowledge was acted upon—that this world is of infinitely less importance than the next. And remembering the Southern temperament, this fact rightly understood and combined with that other fact of the ignorance through neglect of the people, gives us the key to the whole situation in the Midi (and in Northern Italy) in St. Dominic's day. It was infinitely easier to reach Heaven (so taught the

[1] *The Spirit of Mediævalism*, ut supra. [2] *Ibid.*

Catharists), by receiving the *Consolamentum* after an existence of carelessness, of vice—even of crime—than by submitting to the stern and simple discipline of the Catholic Church with its incessant demands upon the life and conscience. Who would not choose to live as he pleased rather than daily deny himself a large number of desirable sins if in the former case Heaven could be gained without even contrition, certainly without confession, merely by the performance of a short ceremony which occupied less than five minutes?[1] The true strength of the Albigensian heresy lay in its subtle and satanic appeal through self-indulgence to the lowest and worst side of human nature. The ignorance which brought about this lamentable state of things could only be combated by properly qualified teachers, such as Pope Innocent III. was endeavouring to scatter throughout the infected provinces; by such an organised system of preachers of Catholic truth as was taking shape in the mind and soul of the Apostle of Languedoc.

The Catharist heresy was essentially social, not political, like that of the Huguenots, or the English Protestants of the sixteenth century; but it was enormously helped and fostered by the political differences of mediæval Europe, by that war of "all against all" which the average Catholic so often forgets, so imperfectly understands. In those days, broadly speaking, every man was a soldier. "Mediæval Europe," says a modern writer, "was a camp with a church in the background." And these differences were eagerly seized by the heresiarchs to advance their own claims; to sow doubt in the hearts of men, and hatred against their lawful, but too often tyrannical rulers, and—which was their real aim—against those whom Divine Authority had associated with those rulers, the Catholic prelates and clergy. The *Parfaits* knew perfectly what they were about; the *Croyants* either did not know or did not care. For here, again, though cruelly misguided, shone out the sublime and childlike simplicity of mediæval faith; they pinned with careless confidence their

[1] See Appendix A. The death-bed ritual was brief.

hopes of eternal salvation to the black garments of the "Good Men," those austere leaders whose false asceticism moved their ignorant disciples to so great awe and wonder; the men who had promised them not only the future bliss of an easily-won heaven, but the present joy of earth! "Believe and do what you will!" was the travestied, unwritten motto of the Catharist.

This fact once grasped, the extraordinary grip which this revolting heresy had upon the very heart of the people will be easily understood. St. Dominic grasped it, and succeeded where so many others had failed. Necessary as we believe the terrible Crusade to have been, a chastisement entirely in accordance with mediæval ideas and with the faith of the age, the Albigensian heresy, though checked, could never be conquered by force of arms. The bigoted, obstinate men, who preferred to die rather than forsake their facile, false belief, were to be conquered and won for the Church, not by lance and spear, but by that word of God which is "sharper than a two-edged sword"; not by stern justice, but by an appeal to mind and heart; not by fear, but by the sublime unselfishness of love!

From 1206 to 1215, when he first brought his sons to Toulouse, Dominic was connected more or less closely with Fanjeaux. One of the proudest boasts of the little town to-day is that for those nine years he was parish priest here; but though he often signed himself, "*Curé de Fanjeaux, Prieur de Prouille*," the first title has a very different sense to-day. He was never there for many weeks together, the claims of his wide apostolate necessarily led him continually on long and weary journeys through Gascony and Languedoc; a tireless missionary, returning whenever possible to his beloved children at Prouille, and thence to the parish on the hill above, which he had made his special charge. The little house in which he dwelt still exists, a stone's-throw from the church; and though it has been almost entirely rebuilt, one room, with a low, heavily-raftered roof, earthen floor, and open hearth beneath a wide chimney, remains as the Saint left it,

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

THE "HOUSE OF ST. DOMINIC" AT FANJEAUX
(The window of his cell is immediately to the right of the open door)

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

CELL OF ST. DOMINIC AT FANJEAUX

and is still redolent of his presence. How often must those great beams have echoed his sighs and prayers; how many times have his tears, his blood, fallen drop by drop, upon the cold, damp floor? A little altar has been erected opposite the hearth by which in winter he doubtless warmed his chilled limbs, his half-frozen hands—for even in Languedoc winter can be bitter! Except the Signadou, nothing in Fanjeaux brings us face to face with St. Dominic like this little low bare room which has been hallowed by his bodily presence.

But to the pilgrim the whole village of Fanjeaux is holy ground. The picturesque *Grand'rue*, with its precipitous cobbled path lined with tall, tumble-down houses, which leads from the highroad to the church; the byeways, the market-place, the ancient ruined walls, all breathe the presence of our Saint. The present church, whose slender spire rising above a square pierced tower is, like its sister at Montréal, a landmark for miles around, was built at the close of the thirteenth century, and was therefore unknown to him, but it stands on the site of that in which he has so often preached; where he prayed on that wonderful July night before he received the Sign from Heaven. And though only traces exist of the fortifications, though the castle has long ceased to exist, though houses decay and be rebuilt, Fanjeaux itself is but little altered. There was not a field, not a cottage near the town that Dominic did not know; not a path which has not been worn by his feet. One, which we shall presently visit, is still called "St. Dominic's Road." He never rested, never spared himself. Even during his first week in Fanjeaux he could perceive signs that his preaching had not been in vain; that the mists of ignorance were beginning to fade before the dawning of the Truth. What was to be the next step? Knowing that it would be revealed to him, he waited, and filled the days with preaching and prayer.

A few days after the Conference, St. Dominic, after an evening sermon in the open air—probably in the market-place—to the greater part of the people of Fanjeaux, entered the

little church hard by to spend an hour in prayer. As he knelt there the door opened, and a group of young women approached him as the Greeks of old came to St. Philip, with that petition on their lips which is the unuttered, unconscious cry of the world: "Sir, we would see Jesus." Falling at his feet, they begged this new apostle to guide them. "Servant of God," they exclaimed, "help us! If what you have preached to-day be true, we have long been deceived by the spirit of error, for up till now we have always believed in the *Good Men* whom you call heretics. We have always held to their doctrine, and now your sermon leaves us in cruel uncertainty. Servant of God, we beseech you, pray that the Lord will make the true Faith known to us, because in that Faith we desire to live, to die, and to be saved."

He rose from his knees. The hour had come perhaps sooner than he had dared to hope! Here were the first-fruits of his preaching; here was the first sheaf of that world-wide harvest which was to be garnered in his Threefold Order. There in the old church built by a more faithful generation Dominic spoke burning words of courage and counsel to these young souls who had come to him for help. They were nine, all pupils of the *Parfaites*, of good family, eager to hear the truth. How could he help them? It was easy to speak, to instruct and answer questions, but how could he protect them when they went back to those enemies of the Faith, who would instantly strive to root up the good seed, to undo all that he had already done? One thing was certain: if he wished to preserve his converts he must take them completely away from their surroundings; he must provide them with a refuge into which no heretic could penetrate. As he spoke to the young girls, these thoughts kindling in his heart, a truly nerve-shaking apparition rushed upon them out of the shadows. A hideous nondescript animal "of terrific size," cat-like, with savage eyes and formidable claws, a creature "as black as the chimney of hell from whence it issued," burst into the church, to the terror of the women, and for the space of an hour circled round them in a manner which, judging by the ancient

chronicles, must have been as alarming as it was revolting. Finally, after uttering horrible cries, with one mighty bound the demon rushed up the bell-ropes and disappeared in the darkness of the tower, leaving behind him an odour so terrible "that not all the balms of Arabia could overcome it."[1] "See," said Dominic, "you can judge by this apparition which God has permitted, of him whose slaves you have been until now." Before they left him his visitors declared their firm faith in his doctrine, and their resolution to be guided by him in future.

Shortly afterwards, on the night of 21st–22nd July 1206, the eve of the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, St. Dominic passed through the village towards the spot, which has ever since been called the Signadou.[2] Just beyond the spot where the north gate then stood, a jutting angle of rock from which the ground falls away on two sides in a precipitous descent, forms a wide shelf from which a marvellous view may be gained.

Far away to the south float the shadowy blue peaks of the Pyrenees, distant giants mingling with the clouds; to the north the plain rises in long gentle undulations to the culminating ridge of the Montagne Noire. Nearer, like a lion couchant on its distant hill, Montréal stands clear against the eastern sky. And from horizon to horizon the whole country lies fair beneath the embroidered mantle of cornfield and vineyard, of flowering meadow and blossoming orchard which covers it as with a many-hued garment of silken brocade, a veritable poem of colour. Here is the warm sienna of the freshly-turned earth, where starry-eyed white oxen drag a primitive plough through the long furrows; the pale umber of the newly-sown, sun-baked fields, hedgeless and unwalled; the vivid emerald of the summer vineyards, deepening in

[1] Graphic details of this apparition are given by Bernard Gui, and other biographers of St. Dominic. (See *Cart. I.*, p. 134). Its truth was sworn to at the Saint's canonisation by a nun of Prouille, one of the ten eye-witnesses of the scene.

[2] Signadou, in the dialect of the country=Signe de Dieu=the Sign of God. It is often spelt "Seignadou."

autumn to bronze and burning red, to deep yellow and palest ochre, with here and there a patch of flamboyant scarlet above the purple clusters which hang so near the ground. Mingling with all this are blue-green stretches of feathery maize, meeting the warm ripeness of the waving wheat; the rosy pink of clover fading into the lilac sheen of flowering lucerne; with sometimes a splendid splash of velvety crimson like fresh-spilt wine, as *trèfle incarnat* pours down the hillside, or a brilliant patch of pure cloth of gold—"a field of charlock in the sudden sun." Add to this the silvery green of the willows which follow the water-courses through the valleys; the pallor of the wind-swept olives, the sombre darkness of the stately cypresses, the flame of the yellow broom which in spring-time lights the whole countryside—these colours and a thousand more, veiled in faintest blue haze, indescribable, insistent, changing with the wind, the clouds, the sun; lay the whole like a coverlet over the hilly plain; extend it for leagues till it fades into the summer sky, and you see the Plain of Languedoc as St. Dominic saw it from the Signadou.

The dominating colour-note is set by the splendid, plume-like cypresses, marching in single file down a precipitous slope; clustering round a little white hut among the vineyards; standing sentinel, solitary, in a wheatfield where the purple shadows race across the rippling gold as the corn bows before the summer breeze; cresting the lonely hills; framing the villages; standing out black and solemn against the rosy evening sky. Even the long processions of lofty poplars which one is continually meeting are less impressive than these Tuscan cypresses, a memory of Italy in a landscape which has in it nothing else Italian; which makes no pretension to be grand, vivid, or gorgeous, but is simply beautiful, with a unique, appealing, characteristic beauty, partly dependent on its magnificent distances, partly upon its fortress-crowned hills, but chiefly upon its exquisite colouring, pale, pure, and delicate, which makes St. Dominic's country so perfectly, so typically French!

Photo : R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P

THE HILL OF FANJEAUX WITH THE SIGNADOU, AND PROUILLE ON THE PLAIN BELOW

On a clear night, from this rocky platform, the steeps become abysses, the distances infinite. And it was at night that St. Dominic continually came hither to pray for the souls he was seeking in this fair country unrolled like a map beneath his feet.

The hours passed by as he knelt there upon that memorable July night, his heart full of his great desire to found a convent where the women he rescued from the clutches of Satan might worship God in peace. He did not know how, or where, but he was convinced it must be now, at once. The rest he left to God. And as he prayed for light the stars came out above him, the great burning stars of the south; and the plain below glimmered through the summer darkness, mysterious, elusive.

Suddenly, as he gazed out into the night, he saw a globe of fire like a meteor dart from the star-sown sky and circle thrice over a spot not a mile from the foot of the hill on which he knelt. Then it fell upon the ground and rested there. He knew it for what it was—the Sign of God for which he had so greatly longed, for which he had scarcely dared to pray. On the spot where it had fallen his convent was to rise. Realising this clearly, thanking God with all his heart, he yet prayed with holy prudence that if it were really what he believed, the fire might again fall from Heaven a second and a third time, that he might know of a surety that it was the spot which the Lord had chosen. His prayer was granted. Returning on the two following nights St. Dominic again saw the same prodigy, and understanding, took courage. He had recognised the spot by the light of those southern stars, and knew well to whose intercession he owed its choice. For the Sign of God had fallen upon the little sanctuary of Notre Dame de Prouille.

The rocky shelf on which he knelt has ever since been called the *Signadou*. In July 1538, a great cross was erected here for parochial processions. This having been destroyed at the Revolution was replaced[1] in 1860 by the present cross

[1] By Mme. Jurien. (See next chapter.)

of white marble, upon the pedestal of which was chiselled the ancient votive inscription:

"*Saint Dominique minutant en son esprit*
le dessein de bastire le Monastère de Prouille
et regardant alors en quel lieu il le bastirait,
il vid un soir, estant en fervente prière
une grande flamme qui descendit à l'endroit
où est maintenant basti ce célèbre Monastère;
d'où il colligea que Dieu voulait qu'il fût basti
en ce lieu qui avait été honoré du feu du ciel.
Les habitans dudit Fanjeaux eslevèrent
en mémoire et à l'honneur de ce grand Saint
un oratoire qui s'appelle le Seignadou
dans laquelle il y a une croix de pierre blanche."

Close by stands a shrine in the angle of a wall surmounted by a lofty stone statue of St. Dominic, gazing across the plain to Prouille. Upon the shrine, restored in our own day, is carved the blessing sent by Pope Pius IX. in 1868:

"*Deus vos benedicat et liberet a fulgure et tempestate.*"

The road from Prouille to Fanjeaux is a mere sandy track between fields of corn and maize, bordered for the greater part of the year with a lavish wealth of wild flowers and luxuriant clumps of thistles; some with white-striped leaves and large yellow blossoms; some like those which in late summer cover the stony hillsides of Umbria, slender prickly stalk and leaves and delicate flower-crown, all of the same lovely shade of pale, milky blue. Half-way up, just as the ascent begins to grow steep, stands a stone cross marking the limit of the parish of Fanjeaux. It is also possible to go up by the light railway which runs from Bram past the very gates of Prouille, winding round the hill of Fanjeaux in a succession of giddy curves, and from which some splendid views may be obtained. But the pilgrim, if he be wise, will follow the first time St. Dominic's Road, which leads direct to the Signadou,

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

"LA CROIX DU SICAIRE"

and which can only by courtesy be called a road at all; for the greater part of its length it is scarcely even a track. If we follow the hollow grassy path which turns off the high road just outside the convent avenue, behind a little mysterious ruined house set in cypresses, climb a low hill, and descend a steeply-sloping bank beneath a ridge of overhanging trees, there, among the long grass to the right, we shall see a tall stone cross by the wayside. For this is St. Dominic's Road, and this is the *Croix du Sicaire*.[1]

Everyone knows the story of the would-be murderers who laid wait for St. Dominic, knowing well which way he would come, as he descended the hill of Fanjeaux one night after a long day's work, returning to his brethren at Prouille; how as he came—alone—they were smitten with awe at the sight of him, and their weapons—the harvest implements of peasants—fell from their shaking hands; how they cried out to the Saint, asking him what he should have done had they rushed upon him as they had intended, and his heroic answer: "I should have prayed you not to kill me with a single blow, but to prolong my martyrdom by cutting off my limbs one after another, so that I could see them before me; by then putting out my eyes; and, finally, by leaving all that remained of me still living bathed in my blood. For thus I should have gained a more glorious crown."

It was here, on this very spot, he spoke those words. This cross, which bears no inscription, renewed throughout the centuries, has stood here ever since. Kneeling at its foot one is utterly alone; alone in a wide sea of vineyards and waving grasses. A cloud of painted butterflies hovers above a thymy bank pale with lilac scabious. The only sounds are the chirping of a world of happy crickets, the whirr of an innumerable multitude of tiny wings in the summer sunshine. Looking up to the cypress-girt hill of Fanjeaux towering above us, shutting out the sunset, we see on its summit another cross cut clear against the sky, beside a lofty monument crowned with the statue of the Apostle of Languedoc. It is the

[1] The Cross of the Assassin.

Signadou. St. Dominic's Road will lead us there, straight up the side of the hill. And when we have gained the rocky platform, once more kneeling on this most holy ground as he knelt, seven hundred years ago, gazing out over St. Dominic's country as his statue still gazes over it, the white Basilica and Convent of Prouille lying fair among the trees on the plain below, we begin to understand what he did for the world, what he has done for his children, what he is still doing for us to-day.

For in no other place—not even at his wonderful tomb in far-away Bologna—does "*O Spem Miram*" mean what it does at the Signadou of Fanjeaux.

VI

NOTRE DAME DE PROUILLE

For centuries before the coming of St. Dominic a little village had nestled at the foot of the hill of Fanjeaux, round a castle and tiny church. But evil days had fallen upon Languedoc; the country was overrun by sectaries, devastated by the wars of the great barons; the castle possessed no natural defences; it was abandoned, and became in time a mere heap of ruins. Many of the houses which had depended on it for protection had likewise disappeared. Only a few still clustered round the little church, a sanctuary of Our Lady, which had long been a place of pilgrimage, and which bore a name destined to become glorious throughout the ages—Notre Dame de Prouille.

It had no parish priest, being served from the church of Fanjeaux, and remembering his devotion to all shrines of Our Lady, we cannot doubt that St. Dominic had already visited it when, on those three successive July nights in 1206, he saw the Sign of God fall in fire from heaven upon the sanctuary which was to be the cradle of the future Dominican Order.

The ground on which it stood belonged to the only great lady in Fanjeaux who was not an active member of the Albigensian sect, Na Cavaërs; and it was to her that Dominic immediately addressed himself. She held, with the Bishop of Toulouse, the rights of patronage over Notre Dame de Prouille, and the consent of both *Châtelaine*[1] and Bishop was necessary before he could take the necessary steps to establish his children there. His patience and prudence met with their

[1] She appears to have shared seigneurial rights with the family of de Durfort.

reward. Na Cavaërs granted him the site for which he asked, and made over to him her rights; a fact in which we trace the hand of God more plainly in that this lady, though well disposed, was by no means a staunch Catholic. It is interesting to note that her daughter, after a long and remarkable life spent among the heretics, renounced her errors forty years later, entered the convent of Prouille, and died a holy death in the habit of St. Dominic.

The consent of Bishop Foulques was gladly given. This great prelate, who had been enthroned in his cathedral of St. Stephen at Toulouse on 5th February 1206, having succeeded the infamous Raymond de Rabastens, plays a most important part in the story of St. Dominic in Languedoc.[1] His admiration for the Spanish saint had already developed into a close friendship, which was to continue till death. Henceforth we shall see Dominic and Foulques working hand in hand, in perfect confidence and affection. Among his many episcopal

[1] The story of Bishop Foulques is romantic and deeply interesting. The son of a rich Genoese merchant established at Marseilles, he devoted himself as a youth to literature, especially to the rich treasures of Provençal poetry. Himself a poet, musician, and troubadour, he obtained great success at the courts of Cœur de Lion, of Alfonso II. of Aragon, and of Raymond V. of Toulouse. He married very young, and had two sons. But in the midst of a happy and successful career the call of God sounded in his ears, and his wife, who was worthy of him, did not attempt to dissuade him from it, keenly as she felt the separation. The whole family entered the Cistercian Order, father and sons at the monastery of Boulbonne in Guienne. The holiness and severity of his life and his unusual gifts caused Foulques to be rapidly promoted to office. As Abbot of Florège it is probable he was one of the twelve Cistercian Abbots who answered Arnauld Almeric's call in 1205, and went out from Montréal to evangelise the Midi. At the close of that year he was chosen Bishop of Toulouse, and consecrated by the Archbishop of Arles. He took an active part in the crusade against the Albigenses, and went many times to Rome on ecclesiastical and political missions. Besides taking part in the Lateran Council of 1215, he assisted at several Councils in France, notably that of Toulouse in 1229. After St. Dominic himself he was the principal factor in founding the First Order in that city. He has been accused by non-Catholic writers of cruelty, harshness, treachery, and almost every crime but immorality! He earned these titles to honour by his firm action as regards the Albigensian sectaries and his staunch friendship for the Dominican Order, from the beginning hated and dreaded by the heretics. He died at the close of 1231, after having revived the ideal of the Catholic episcopate in the south of France, his last public act being to sing the first mass of Christmas Day in the great Dominican Church in Toulouse, the foundation-stone of which he had laid the previous year. He was buried in the Abbey of his Order at Grand'-Selve, and his successor in the See of Toulouse was Raymond de Felgar, a Dominican.

friends the Bishop of Toulouse was to hold the first place in Dominic's esteem. Foulques consulted him constantly and acted on his advice. Dominic found in his friend's influence and support the help and encouragement he needed in carrying out his plans—not only in founding Prouille, but in the even greater work which nine years later he was to inaugurate in Toulouse. With the exception of his old friend the Bishop of Osma, whom he was so soon to lose, and who had been the chief human factor in determining his true vocation, St. Dominic, and in him all his children, owed more to the Bishop of Toulouse than to anyone else. In later years a third was admitted to the equal friendship of Bishop and Saint; we find Dominic, Foulques, and Simon de Montfort fighting side by side with spiritual and temporal weapons for the cause of Christ and His Church.

The Act of December 1206, by which the Bishop gave to St. Dominic the Church of Our Lady of Prouille and the ground on each side of it for a distance of thirty paces, was probably drawn up in the month of August.[1] It states that Prouille was given to be a home "for the women converted by the preachers delegated to preach against the heretics and to repel the pestilential heresy."[2] No endowment was made. The tithes and first-fruits of Prouille were to go as usual to Fanjeaux. The foundation was to be a venture of faith. At the same time it was exempt from all charges, so that if it received nothing it should at least be free from encumbrances.

St. Dominic lost no time. Close to the church he built, with a sum of money contributed by Na Cavaërs, a little house of rough brick, unpretending but suitable. "He who loved poverty desired that the building should be poor." It was speedily finished, and on November 22, 1206, the Feast of St. Cecilia, the eldest daughters of St. Dominic entered the Con-

[1] P. Balme considers that either (*a*) Foulques gave in August a verbal consent, so that the buildings could be—as they were - immediately taken in hand; or (*b*) that the deed already quoted was then drawn up, and dated and signed by the Bishop when the convent was already inhabited, in December 1206.

[2] "Ecclesiam Beatæ Mariæ de Pruliano . . . mulieribus conversis per prædicatores ad prædicandum contra hæreticos et ad repellandum hæresim pestiferam delegatos." (See *Cart.* I., p. 148.)

vent of Prouille. On the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, December 27, Dominic gave them their religious habit—a white tunic, a black veil, a *cappa* or long cloak of coarse unbleached wool.[1] It remained thus until in 1218; after the revelation to Blessed Reginald of Orleans, the scapular was added to the habit of the Dominican Order.

"The primitive Rule," writes a nun of Prouille of our own day, "given verbally to the Sisters by the holy patriarch, was merely a short *résumé* of the great monastic laws on poverty, chastity, obedience, silence, perpetual abstinence, long fasts, vigils, and the Divine Office.[2] Rigorous enclosure was imposed. Solitude, contemplation, accompanied by work and penance, formed the very essence of the life of the eldest daughters of St. Dominic. They were true contemplatives. But from the first day the Saint gave them a precise aim for their existence of retirement and mortification. Breathing on his children the apostolic spirit which animated him . . . he made them in their turn apostles by incessant prayer, by daily immolation. To pray day and night; to offer their prayers and mortifications both for the souls to be saved and for those who were working for their salvation—for himself first, and for all other valiant apostolic workers, past, present, and to come—such was the special end which Dominic the Preacher set before his first-born at Prouille, and in them, before all who were to follow them."

It was the *Grand' Ordre*, the *Sœurs Prêcheresses*, who prepared the way for the *Frères Prêcheurs*.

"The Prioress . . . was under the direct authority of Dominic, who retained the spiritual and temporal administration of the monastery, 'in order not to separate his dear daughters from the future Order he contemplated founding,

[1] *Niger naturalis.*

[2] See *Histoire de Notre Dame de Prouille*, pp. 10–15. The nuns lived after the Rule of St. Augustine. The written Constitutions of St. Dominic, drawn up on the lines of the oral Rule of Prouille, were not given till 1220, after the famous foundation of San Sisto at Rome. Their text is preserved in that of a Bull of Gregory IX. (Nov. 1236). They were edited and slightly modified by the fourth Master-General, John the Teuton, and re-edited and finally determined by his successor, Blessed Humbert de Romans.

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

PROUILLE, FROM THE ROAD TO MONTRÉAL

of which they were but the first shoot.' He added to the title of 'Brother' Dominic, which he had assumed after the Council of Castelnau in 1205, that of 'Prior of Prouille.' His apostolic journeys did not permit him to live here, but he watched lovingly over his monastery, and often returned to it. 'The greater part of his goings and comings were to his dear convent, to instruct the sisters, to console them, to encourage them in their holy enterprise.' By his fervent exhortations he increased their fervour; inciting them to walk courageously in the road at the same time austere and sweet, simple and practical, of the highest and greatest religious virtues. It is easy to guess the spiritual progress of the first sisters under the direction of such a master, himself a living model of evangelical perfection . . . their love of God and their neighbour, their ardent piety and perfect recollection, their generous mortification and abnegation which attained to heroism, the sweetness and charity of their sisterly relations.

"They multiplied quickly, thanks to the good odour of their virtues, and to the indefatigable preaching of Dominic, who, in spite of the fury of the heretics, continually increased their number by new conversions." In five years the Community of Prouille numbered thirty-three.

"Such," says Lacordaire, "were the first Dominican nuns. . . . Our Lady of Prouille, solitary and retired, had long waited at the foot of the mountains for the Brothers and Sisters who should be given to her without measure, and bear her name to the ends of the earth."

The Bishop of Osma had been only second to St. Dominic in his devotion to the new foundation. His name is mentioned with that of the Saint in the Act of December 1206 as having himself preferred the request for the donation of Prouille to the Bishop of Toulouse. It was by his advice, given just before taking that final journey to Spain in January 1207, that St. Dominic appointed Brother Guillaume Claret of Pamiers as Procurator of the Convent—always under the

authority of the Holy Founder, to whom he was to render an account of everything.

It is thus evident that from the very beginning of his apostolate St. Dominic had begun to draw to himself the first of that devoted band of men which was so soon to develop into the recognised Order of Friars Preachers. When, after the departure and death of the Bishop of Osma, early in 1207, the Papal legates withdrew for a time and the Cistercian abbots returned to their monasteries, "Blessed Dominic remained alone with a small number of clerics who had associated themselves with his work of ceaseless preaching. None of these companies, however, was attached to him by the bond of vows; they followed him freely, of their own will, attracted by his holiness." Among these first workers were Guillaume Claret and a certain Spaniard, Dominic of Segovia, who had probably been with him since 1205.

These men were so well known and trusted by him and Don Diego that their active help was enlisted for Prouille, which would scarcely have been the case had they been mere recruits. The first document which mentions them formally is the deed dated April 17, 1207, five months after the foundation, by which Bérenger, Archbishop of Narbonne, bestows for ever on the Prioress and nuns of Prouille "newly converted by the teaching and example of Brother Dominic of Osma *and his companions*" the Church of St. Martin of Limoux with all its revenues—the first of countless similar gifts to be made by prelates and nobles of the Midi. Four months later another donation was made "To the Seigneur Dominic of Osma *and all the Brothers* and Sisters, present and future, dwelling at Prouille."

The brothers were occupied at this time chiefly with the temporal concerns of the convent. As fresh gifts of land were granted by pious benefactors — and such gifts were being continually made—it was clearly necessary that Prouille should be represented by men capable of dealing with business affairs, who would act in the name of the religious.

They lodged in a little house outside the convent enclosure; and this joint home of the first Dominican family was called by the people *La Sainte Prédication*. One at least of the preachers invariably accompanied Dominic on his continuous apostolate—generally that "rude macerator of the flesh," Fr Etienne de Metz.

It was not, however, only the rich who brought gifts to Prouille. The humblest peasant thought himself happy if he could offer a few eggs, a basket of fruit, a cheese, or a truss of straw to *La Saint Prédication*. Brothers and sisters alike lived in perpetual abstinence—a Rule which has never been dispensed for the Second Order of St. Dominic.

The convent was very small—so small that for the first few years it was impossible for all the Sisters to live there. A few still remained at Fanjeaux, following the Rule; but this was so undesirable that in September 1212 we find St. Dominic buying a piece of land bordering on the "thirty paces" bestowed by Foulques six years earlier, to enlarge the monastic buildings.

It is delightful to picture St. Dominic, in his new character of father of a family, devoting himself to the affairs of his children. The old documents collected in the *Cartulaire* give us details of his wide thoughtfulness which are as touching as they are interesting. Much land had been given to the Community between 1206–1212, including cornfields from which the greater part of the wants of the religious might be supplied. But what was the use of corn without a mill? An Act of October 22, 1212, shows us St. Dominic acquiring the right for a modest sum to grind the convent corn at the mill of La Roquette. Another document tells us how, two days later, he bought a further piece of land adjoining the monastery, situated "close to the Fountain of Prouille," for the new buildings which it was necessary to erect; and in December of the same year we find Simon de Montfort, from his Parliament at Pamiers, giving a couple of fields at Fanjeaux to his friend, which could be exchanged against ground bordering on that already belonging to the convent. Nothing

was too insignificant to occupy this great Founder, for though Guillaume Claret wisely and carefully administered the temporal affairs of the little community, it was under Dominic's direction; no detail but was carefully considered by the first Prior of Prouille. In this foundation, as in the second at Toulouse, he shows himself not only as a mystic making a magnificent venture of faith, but as a wise, prudent, and perfectly capable man of affairs. And it was exactly this combination of qualities which enabled St. Dominic to move the world!

During the long and terrible Crusade against the Albigenses, Prouille, though in the very heart of the affected country, "a nest of doves surrounded by the eyries of eagles," remained unharmed, untouched. Not even Raymond of Toulouse, nor the terrible Count de Foix, himself dared to meddle with *La Sainte Prédication*. Its illustrious visitors were numerous —we have proof presumptive that Blessed Reginald of Orleans was amongst them; Simon de Montfort, one of its greatest benefactors, with his wife Countess Alix, often came here; Foulques of Toulouse and Gui de Vaux-Cernay, Bishop of Carcassonne, with numerous other prelates, were also guests of Prouille. Even the future King of France, the father of St. Louis IX., visited this little home of peace and prayer, untroubled by the noise of war.

When in 1216 the Friars took possession of their first convent of St. Romain in Toulouse, it was decided that henceforth four brothers under a Prior should continue at Prouille to manage its affairs as before. This arrangement was in effect until the Revolution, though the numbers swelled to over a hundred. In the house outside the enclosure lived the chaplain and confessors of the convent, occupied not only with the spiritual welfare of the nuns, but with the temporal business of the monastery. In 1235 the Friars, anxious to give themselves entirely to the work of preaching, made a great effort to free themselves of this charge, but at the request of the Prioress and community Pope Gregory IX. intervened, and in a Bull addressed to the Master-General,

B. Jordan of Saxony, in 1236, commanded that St. Dominic's intention should be carried out, and that the spiritual direction and temporal government of Prouille should remain in the hands of the Friars Preachers.

Full of hardships and austerities as was the life of the nuns of the Second Order, the monastery wanted for nothing, and grew and flourished by reason of the splendid gifts continually made to it, while the number of religious increased in proportion. Both choir and lay sisters lived lives of severest penance, sleeping in their habits and shoes upon the ground, devoting themselves utterly to mortification and prayer. The convent as left by St. Dominic was soon found too small to shelter the number of ladies, many of them converts, all of noble family, who flocked thither. New buildings were begun. At the end of the thirteenth century Prouille was one of the most splendid and celebrated religious houses in France, and this monastery, the second of four which have stood upon the same spot, was by far the most imposing of all. It is described by Jean de Réchac in the seventeenth century as an oblong enclosure, 300 paces broad and 400 long, surrounded by walled moats with double gates. Between the two moats were tree-planted meadows. The interior wall was fortified, and had a drawbridge beneath a lofty tower. Beyond this, round a great court, of which the church of Notre Dame formed one side, were the men's cloisters, quite distinct from the smaller cloister of the Friars, beside their little church of St. Martin. In the Friars' church was a double choir, "after the manner of the Carthusians," the first for the priests, the second for the lay brothers. Of these there was a large number, necessary for the management of the extensive property of the monastery—generally about eighty, though there were only twenty-five Fathers, who were occupied partly as confessors to the nuns, partly in the direction of the little army of lay brothers, "lest their occupations should tempt them to grow lax in virtue, and to dispense themselves from the obligations of the religious life."

On the other side of the nun's cloister were their refectory,

work-room, and chapter-house, and above these their cells. Their enclosure was surrounded by a lofty wall, distinct from that which shut in the whole monastery, and completely separating the two establishments. The exterior wall was set with fifteen towers, in honour of the fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary, "to which the nuns have the greatest devotion." Such was Prouille till in 1715 it was accidentally destroyed by fire, not entirely, but in great part. It speedily rose again from its ashes, scarcely less magnificent, only to fall for ever—so thought its enemies—during the storms of the terrible French Revolution.

Of its interior history during this time a volume might be written; and it is impossible to condense within the limits of a few paragraphs anything but the barest outlines. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries all went well. It was the Golden Age of Prouille. The convent was governed as St. Dominic had willed; the nuns lived as saintly contemplatives in the "enclosed garden of lilies." "Behind the impenetrable *grilles* of their cloister," writes one of their successors in the nineteenth century, "St. Dominic's daughters were not, as some might think, poor prisoners crushed beneath the weight of their chains. On the contrary, in this hidden retreat their souls were free, rid of all earthly burdens, happy in their own way; finding joy and a consolation unknown to the world in meditation and continual mortification. Vowed to a life of penance, the sisters were not allowed to neglect manual work. 'Let no sister,' said St. Dominic in his primitive constitutions, 'be idle in the cloister, for idleness is the enemy of the soul and mother of all vices, but let her hands be always occupied with work.'" Spinning was one of their principal duties. Every year fifteen *quintals* of pure white wool from their own sheep were spun and woven by the nuns into the coarse serge from which their habits were made. Some wove altar-linen; others worked at exquisite embroideries and hangings for the two churches, for which no materials, no jewels, were thought too splendid and costly. They worked together in a room called the *Laborerium*, under the charge of a nun, who

took the place there of the Prioress whenever the latter was called away. But their most important occupation was that of the copying and illumination of MSS. by the *Scriptrices* who worked in the *Laborerium* with the other religious.[1] All their missals, breviaries, and choir-books were thus transcribed and richly adorned. They also studied—a special prescription of their Rule—and spent many hours in practising the beautiful plain chant necessary for the perfect singing of the Divine office, for which Prouille was always justly celebrated, as it is to-day. When we remember the long hours spent in contemplation, in hearing Mass, in reciting the Canonical Hours, in Chapter, and add to these the time necessarily given to sleep, food, and recreation, it is clear that the nuns of Prouille could not have found time hang heavily on their hands.

The temporal possessions prospered, giving the means of livelihood to a large number of the poor, while from the convent itself food and abundant alms were bestowed upon those unable to work. Poor-laws and workhouses were as unknown as they were unneeded in the Ages of Faith! For over three centuries this ideal state of things continued, and then, alas! Prouille fell on evil days as regarded the interior government of the convent. Not that it ever became "relaxed," in the sense in which the term has been applied to other great religious houses of France—that crime can never be laid to the charge of Prouille, or to one of her many foundations,[2] where the nuns, "triumphing over the world,

[1] Their precious work formed the nucleus of the library at Prouille, comprising priceless archives, almost all destroyed at the Revolution, though a few are still scattered through the great public libraries of the Midi. The Prior of Prouille was usually the *archiviste.*

[2] The sixteen foundations of Prouille were:—*Thirteenth Century:* San Sisto Vecchio (Rome), made by St. Dominic himself; Prouillan de Condom (1283), Marseille, and Aix-en-Provence (1286–90); Metz-en-Lorraine (1290); St. Pardoux (Perigueux, 1293); Montpellier (1295); St. Agnès de Saragossa (1299). *Fourteenth Century:* Poissy (1304); St. Praxède d'Avignon (1347); Auriac (1348); Barcelona (1359). *Fifteenth Century:* Villemur (1447). *Sixteenth Century:* Lectoure and Agen (1576–85). *Seventeenth Century:* Nay-en-Béarn. It was from this last monastery that in 1880 a little colony of nuns came to take possession of the mother-house at Prouille, rebuilt after its destruction in 1792.

the flesh, and the devil, lived in mortal bodies like the Angels of Heaven." The evil came in another way.

In 1516 Francis I. had concluded with Pope Leo X. a *Concordat* which was to have disastrous results for many an abbey. By one of its provisions the King had the right to appoint, in case of vacancy, a religious of the same Order as superior in any monastery of men or women, subject to the Pope's confirmation. This did away, at one blow, with the right of conventual elections. In spite of a qualifying clause relating to monasteries having special privileges, Francis I. did not hesitate to avail himself of this power, when in 1538, on the death of the venerable Prioress Jeanne de Sévérac, who had governed Prouille for thirty-six years, he immediately appointed Jeanne d'Amboise, one of the choir-nuns, to succeed her, doubtless on account of the services rendered to the kingdom by her illustrious family. The nuns refused to receive her, appealed, and elected a canonical Prioress. But in vain did the Master-General, in vain did Pope Paul III. himself intervene. The King's will prevailed, and Mme. Jeanne d'Amboise remained for five years in the unenviable position of the first Royal Prioress of Prouille. Her rule, however, was so unsatisfactory that she was then constrained to abdicate, and in 1543 exchanged her Priory for the government of a Benedictine convent. A few days afterwards letters patent from the king imposed upon Prouille "the most high and illustrious Princess Magdalen de Bourbon, of the Order of St. Benedict, Abbess of the Monastery of the Holy Cross, Poitiers."

Seeing resistance to be useless, Albert de las Cazas, the Master-General, consented to the appointment. The nuns obediently received this great lady, who, fortunately for them, was no less remarkable for her virtues than her illustrious birth, and who governed Prouille worthily for twenty-five years. Probably the fact of its Prioress being a princess of the blood-royal had much to do with the exemption of Prouille from the general destruction of ecclesiastical property wrought by the Huguenots in the sixteenth century. It was untouched in

the midst of ruin, and marked with especial favour by the King, Charles IX., who on January 27, 1565, "came to dine here with his royal cousin."

But after the death of the Princess-Prioress matters rapidly changed for the worse. From 1611–1751 the Crown continued to impose Royal Prioresses, almost always Benedictines, upon the royal monastery; and though some of these ladies were good and prudent superiors, the majority were the reverse. The story of the forcible introduction (1630) of Madame de Levis-Ventadour within the cloister by armed nobles, most of whom were her relatives, and of the deplorable events of her Priorate, read almost like a page of Dumas! We hear of the intruder going up to the canonically-elected Prioress in choir, during vespers, and actually shaking her as she knelt in her stall. We hear, too, the unutterably sad story of the divisions among the nuns; the weaker led away by the general relaxation of discipline—never of morals—which the Royal Prioresses made no scruple of introducing; the rest, firm in their loyalty to the Rule and the Constitutions of the Order, setting themselves boldly in opposition. But neither king nor devil was able even by this means completely and finally to disturb the peace of Prouille. From 1751 the Prioresses, still chosen by the Crown, were selected from amongst the religious themselves, and serenity and unity once more brooded over the convent until, in the fatal year 1792, came—as was then believed—the end.

After resisting as far as they could; after long and fruitless correspondence with the so-called authorities, and repeated warnings from influential friends, the persecuted nuns left the convent secretly, taking with them such treasures as they could personally carry away, on the night of October 2–3, 1792, a few hours before the "municipality" of Fanjeaux, followed by a troop of malefactors whose sole purpose was to rifle and pillage, arrived to expel them. The doors were forced, and everything in the deserted convent wantonly destroyed—books and priceless MSS., lengths of fresh-woven serge, the winter store of provisions, corn, vegetables, and dried fruits; all the

treasures of the churches and sacristies which the nuns had been unable to secrete or take away—all was torn, burnt, or trampled underfoot.

The nuns, however, were safe. Many returned to their homes, where they followed the Rule till the end of their lives; some sought shelter among their humble friends in the neighbouring villages. The Prioress [1] and two religious found refuge at Villasavary, from whose hill they could see only too plainly the ruins of their beloved Prouille. Not one of St. Dominic's children looked back. Old and young alike persevered in their holy vocation, though in secret, in the uncongenial atmosphere of the noisy, bustling world.[2]

In June 1793 Prouille was bought from the State, which had stolen it, by a private individual, with all its gardens, vineyards and buildings, the two churches being included. Though saved from the fate of other great monasteries which, then, as recently, were degraded to secular uses, it was not to escape destruction. It became a "vast stone-quarry," from which the proprietor, at first by public auction, later piecemeal, sold the materials of the walls, cloisters and towers to the highest bidders of the neighbourhood. Many a cottage and farm was built of the stones of ancient Prouille; one whole street in Toulouse, it is said, arose from its ruins. In a few years the last fragments were removed; all was desolate. The ground, which for nearly six centuries had been hallowed ceaselessly by the prayers and tears of St. Dominic's children, was ploughed and sown; and soon crops of golden corn waved and rippled over the site revealed at the Signadou—the site of the churches and convent of Our Lady of Prouille.

All was gone! Yet, down by the brook still stood the fragment of an ancient wall, half-hidden in the summer by the

[1] Mme. de Montault-Miglos ended her days in a farm hidden in the recesses of the Pyrenees, near the Château de Miglos, formerly her father's property.

[2] Of one of them it is told that she always lived as if in the convent, and this might be said of many. Others devoted themselves, like Sisters of Charity, to the sick and poor, visiting them in their cottages and tenderly caring for them. But all alike were faithful to the end. One of the last survivors died in 1846.

ripening wheat, unnoticed, solitary—the last stones of the convent enclosure which had been somehow overlooked in the general destruction. And this was to remain, as had been prophesied before the Revolution was dreamt of, "like a patch of snow in a hollow till fresh snow fell."

So passed half a century. Then, in God's good time, appeared Henry Dominic Lacordaire; the orange-tree of St. Dominic at Santa Sabina threw out a fresh vigorous shoot; the Dominican Order was gloriously restored in France. With the story of Père Lacordaire is inextricably woven the romance of the restoration of Notre Dame de Prouille. His original design was to buy back the field upon which the convent had stood, and there to build a votive chapel. But God had other designs for His sanctuary. The restorer of Prouille was to be a woman, whose heart, in her distant home in the Indian Ocean, had long been moved to consecrate her great wealth to the service of Christ and His Church.

Marie Antoinette Camille Panon Desbassyns was the daughter of a French nobleman settled in his vast property in the Isle of Bourbon. Here in 1831 she had married the Vicomte Louis Charles Jurien, and had ever since, in her native island, in France, Italy, and Switzerland, devoted herself, her time and her money to works of charity. By a series of providential circumstances this lady, now a widow, and sole mistress of her great inheritance, was brought in 1854 into touch with Père Lacordaire. Ignorant at that time of the very existence of Prouille, she was led by a chain of supernatural interior revelations henceforth to consecrate herself and her immense fortune solely to its restoration. She built the present convent, and then began the magnificent, still unfinished Basilica, making her own home in a house which stood close by on the roadside, and which had been built after the Revolution as an inn. That house, still called the *Vicariat*, to-day empty and desolate, was after her death inhabited by the Dominican Fathers, who came again to dwell at Prouille and serve the new convent, as their Founder had

willed. The first stone of the new monastery was laid on May 31, 1854; that of the Basilica on the Feast of St. Dominic in the same year.[1] In 1860 Mme. Jurien lost at a blow—owing to the failure of crops and continual bad seasons—the greater part of her fortune. The monastery was finished, but the Basilica had scarcely risen from the ground. Until her death in 1879, however, this noble woman continued to devote herself to the work, living chiefly on the spot, and denying herself the luxuries to which she had been accustomed in order to give at least a small sum towards the achievement of her beloved work. She died without having realised her heart's desire; without seeing the return of the Dominican nuns, for which she had so greatly longed, to the empty grass-grown cloisters of the new convent. Like Moses, she had borne the burden and heat of the day, but not to Moses was it given to lead his people into the Promised Land.

Immediately after her death the yet unoccupied buildings were offered for sale, and by the interposition of Divine Providence were ultimately acquired, on July 11, 1879, by the Very Rev. Hyacinthe M. Cormier, the present[2] Master-General, then Provincial of Toulouse, in the name of the Convent of Nay, the youngest daughter of ancient Prouille. His dream was to people the new monastery with religious from this foundation; a dream which was realised in April 1880, when the Prioress and eight companions left Nay for ever, and journeyed to Prouille by way of Lourdes and Toulouse. They entered the sacred precincts of Prouille of the Resurrection on the Feast of St. Peter Martyr, and there they have dwelt for thirty-two short years, watching the glorious Basilica slowly rise beside their convent walls, the pilgrims thronging from all parts of France to their beloved shrine, until twenty-one years after their entrance the enemy of souls again had his will of

[1] The story of the resurrection of Prouille, a long and extraordinary series of supernatural coincidences and revelations—among the latter a repetition of the miracle of the Signadou—should be studied by every Dominican. It can be found in the *Histoire du Monastère de Notre Dame de Prouille*, an English version of which it is hoped will shortly appear.

[2] 1912.

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

PROUILLE: BASILICA AND CONVENT, FROM THE ASCENT TO TANJEAUX (sunset)

France; the building was stopped, the Fathers driven from the Vicariat, the pilgrimages forbidden. There the eldest daughters of St. Dominic still remain, beside the roofless walls of Notre Dame de Prouille, not knowing from day to day when the sword suspended over their heads may fall, when they too, in their turn, may be called to go forth and leave their home once more. For, though the religious applied in 1902 for "authorisation," it has never been granted to them.

Such then is an outline, necessarily incomplete, of the dramatic history of Notre Dame de Prouille.

And what of Prouille to-day? It is well to begin our exploration of St. Dominic's country by a visit to the Cradle of the Order. The light-railway running from the nearest main-line station[1] will take us there across the beautiful, uneven plain in less than an hour, stopping just outside the gateless avenue of whispering aspens which is now the entrance to the convent. Across the cornfields we see it in the distance, a group of red-roofed buildings clustering round the pale beauty of the great white Basilica. There is no village. A house or two is scattered lonely amongst the stretches of maize and clover; an ancient stone doorway framed in dusky cypresses stands solitary by the roadside. Its empty portal frames a steep slope of flowering lucerne. The country, which looks level from Fanjeaux, is in reality almost hilly down here in the plain. There is a curious resemblance in the whole panorama to certain landscapes in the Holy Land, near Jerusalem.

The little train puffs away on its journey to Fanjeaux, and we are left standing on the edge of a cornfield. The only sounds are the incessant chirping of the crickets—myriads of tiny blissful voices among the ripening barley, and the creaking of a heavy country cart, drawn by a yoke of beautiful white oxen, whose great dark eyes under their long, curling

[1] Bram, on the Ligne du Midi, between Toulouse and Carcassonne, is on the main line between Paris and Narbonne.

lashes regard the world with disconcerting indifference! The short-cut to the convent is through this belt of fragrant pines, but we will go down the long, straight avenue, at the end of which the great Basilica rises majestically beyond the trees, the convent to the right, the hostelry, managed by the extern sisters, for visitors, to the left. On its steps, among the delicious pink, almond-scented oleanders, a true Dominican welcome awaits us.

A marvellous peace and silence broods over this island of white buildings, set in trees and sunny gardens, and surrounded by a rolling, grassy sea. This long, narrow path to the right, closely hedged by tall cypresses, winds through their shadow to the *Vicariat*, with its broad verandah of vines, its deserted, overgrown garden, its maze of empty rooms, in one of which this book was begun, and the desolation of its abandoned chapel, where the frescoes are peeling from the walls, and spiders weave dark hangings from the heavy beams. This large square building beyond the Hostelry is the Hospice, where after the restoration were housed the many pilgrims to Notre Dame de Prouille. The whole of its ground floor was a refectory, whence narrow stairs led to a wooden gallery running round three sides of the interior, out of which open little whitewashed bedrooms, through whose vine-wreathed windows the pilgrims could gaze out across St. Dominic's country stretching fair to the blue horizon.

To-day the Pilgrimage House is empty and desolate. A few trusses of golden straw lie on the floor of the unused refectory. The door shuts behind us with a heavy clang as we pass out under the belt of great trees beneath which a brown mule walks—at intervals—in an unending circle to draw water from the convent well.

The nave of the great Basilica is roofless, and every year the heat and torrential rains of summer, and the storms of winter, disintegrate the masonry of the lofty white walls, while the wind and damp remorselessly penetrate the wooden hoarding with which the great arch opening into the sanctuary is filled in. This sanctuary, wide and beautiful, worthy of the

Photo. R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

BASILICA OF NOTRE DAME DE PROUILLE: THE ROOFLESS NAVE

(Entrance to left; choir arch – boarded off – to right)

best traditions of the Order, is approached by two aisles, temporarily partitioned from the nave, and beyond it the heavy *grille* of the nun's choir fills in a second arch. The high altar in the midst, facing the roofless nave, is merely a temporary structure; behind it, facing the choir-*grille,* is the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, at which Mass is daily said. Only three of the fifteen chapels—those of St. Dominic, St. Catherine of Siena, and Blessed Imelda—can be said to be decorated; the altars in the aisles, each dedicated to a saint of the Order in honour of a mystery of the Rosary, are simply bare wooden tables, their names fastened on the wall above as the title was nailed over the Cross: St. Pius, St. Peter Martyr, St. Raymond of Pennafort, and the rest. The Basilica of Prouille to-day is the embodiment of a piteous appeal to all lovers of St. Dominic; the ideal of a dream, "incomplete and imperfect." It ought to be finished—to that extent its security as the property of the Order is guaranteed—but if the perfect dome cannot yet rise like the bell of a great white flower above the Basilica of St. Dominic's Prouille, the nave ought to be at least temporarily roofed. Let us go in, as we pass the open door, and look at it, its mighty walls of glistening white granite open to the sky, the grass-grown floor strewn with blocks of hewn stone. . . . The sight is too sorrowful. The nuns are singing Compline; we are in time to hear *Salve Regina*, sung as in all the world it is only sung at Prouille.

The rest—and the hundredth part of it has not been told—must be seen, must be felt, on the spot where St. Dominic's blessing rests, where his presence still lingers. For here, from the cradle of the Order, so forgotten, so little known in other lands, from the silent peace, the deep solitude of Prouille, he still appeals to his children for the honour of Our Lady's sanctuary; he still cries to all his lovers who are free to make the pilgrimage, "Come and see." And to every true child of St. Dominic, Prouille is home.

VII

THE ANCIENT PILGRIMAGE OF MAS SAINTES PUELLES

It was during the cruel persecutions in Gaul, towards the middle of the fifth century, that two Christian maidens suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Arian Visigoths, invaders and then masters of the Narbonnais, at the Roman settlement of Recaudum. This place is identified by some writers with the modern Ricaud, a little to the north of the main road from Toulouse to Castelnaudary and Carcassonne, from which the relics of the martyrs were brought in procession with great pomp and ceremony to be laid in the Church of Mas Stes. Puelles, a few miles to the south, and also a Roman encampment. Others say—probably with reason—that Mas Stes. Puelles is only another name for Recaudum itself, re-named not only in honour of the possession of the relics of the martyrs, but in commemoration of their sufferings on this very spot. A third explanation might be that Mas Stes. Puelles, which means literally the grange or farm of the Holy Virgins, was actually the home of the martyrs who were put to death at Recaudum. This would account for their relics being brought in triumph to their birthplace. But however this may be, one thing is certain: that for several centuries Mas Stes. Puelles, to-day utterly forgotten, was a popular place of pilgrimage, and that a beautiful votive church had risen above the bodies of the martyrs, by whose intercession countless miracles had been wrought. The church had been destroyed and rebuilt before St. Dominic's day, and in the thirteenth century the pilgrimages had almost ceased. For in spite of popular devotion—perhaps in a sense on

account of it, for where is the devil so busy as when visible and supernatural manifestations of Divine power are constantly taking place?—Mas Stes. Puelles in the eleventh and twelfth centuries had fallen headlong into heresy.

The little village is to-day but a name on the pathetic list of "forgotten shrines," and it may be added that to the Catholic student of history there are few more fascinating subjects than that of these forsaken pilgrimages.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century no less than ten houses of the *Parfaits* could be counted in Mas Stes. Puelles, both of men and women; houses frequented by the chief families of the district. It was doubtless for this reason that St. Dominic, probably at the close of 1206, came down here from Fanjeaux, in company with Foulques, Bishop of Toulouse, to evangelise those who had fallen from their first faith. And here, though we have no documentary evidence to prove it, circumstances are too strong to allow us to doubt the fact that, at Mas Stes. Puelles, St. Dominic met another future Saint, Peter of Nolasco. This young man, who was a native of the place, in 1215, "left his native country and took refuge in Barcelona, purposely to escape from the influence of Catharist and Waldensian." If it is scarcely possible to doubt that, as a boy, he had listened to the burning words of the Father of the Order of Preachers, as Saint and Bishop preached to the crowds in the *Place* and the low-roofed parish-church, which had replaced the more ancient building, it is equally impossible to doubt that those words sank deep into the heart of the future founder of the Order of Mercy, and left traces there which were never to be eradicated.

Assuredly, neither of the Saints guessed that a few years later, in 1222, just after the death of St. Dominic, one of his most illustrious sons, St. Raymond of Pennafort, who was to be his second successor as Master-General, would, in answer to a miraculous vision of Our Lady, clothe the same Peter Nolasco with the habit of the Order of Mercy in presence of King James I. of Aragon, in the Cathedral of

Barcelona; or that later St. Raymond would draw up for the new Institute the Rule bestowed upon it by Pope Gregory IX.

The conversion of St. Peter Nolasco, if indeed he were present, was by no means the only result of this mission. Forty years later, in 1246, there were living at Mas Stes. Puelles three or four women who had been "reconciled" by St. Dominic as children; Na Segura, then fifty-five, who had actually received the *Consolamentum* at the age of ten, and had been living as a *Parfaite* forty-five years, till reconciled; Raimonde Gasc, and Ermengarde Boer, both of whom had married after their abjuration. These names are preserved in the Register of the Inquisition,[1] and their owners appeared before the Commissioners for Heresy because they were suspected or known to have relapsed. It seems probable that St. Dominic actually reconciled these and other heretics, the Bishop of Toulouse simply indicating what public penance each person should then accomplish.

"Na Segura in her deposition confessed that she had only performed the penance imposed by the Bishop (to wear two crosses upon her breast, one on each side), in a very imperfect manner. Often she did not wear the crosses, or concealed them." Nevertheless she affirmed that she had no dealings with the sect of the Catharists since her reconciliation. "This was false, and she was well aware that she lied, for since her abjuration she had married . . . a man who, at first a fanatical *Croyant*, soon became a 'clothed heretic' (*i.e.* a *Parfait*), and up to the time of her appearing before a previous commission in 1245 she had received in her house, and with her husband adored certain Catholic heresiarchs, several of whom were of shameful life, both men and women,[2] and had frequented their society . . . Evidently Na Segura had not greatly profited by the merciful charity of St. Dominic." The other two women were equally unsatisfactory. Raimonde, more truthful, deposes that after her recon-

[1] Now in the Municipal Library of Toulouse, MS. No. 609.
[2] See Cart. I. p. 181.

ciliation she had again adored the *Parfaits*, and that to her also the Bishop had given the penitence of the two crosses, "but that, except in her house, she had never worn them except covered and hidden, without doubt from human respect, and from fear of the mockery and reproach of those whom she had abandoned." Having also married a *Croyant* she was in 1246 herself suspected of being a *Parfaite*. The third, Ermengarde, who like Raimonde had been "hereticated" by Isarn de Castres, had likewise relapsed after her reconciliation and subsequent marriage, and in 1237 was known to have received and hidden for a whole year in her house two *Parfaites*, whom thrice a week, with other *Croyants*, she publicly adored. When these two women were discovered and arrested Ermengarde took to flight. So little credit could be attached to her statements that at her previous appearance in 1245 her judge had written on the margin of her process with his own hand: "This woman is a suspect, and could say much if she would."

These names, coming down to us through seven centuries as in a sense the failures of the mission at Mas Stes. Puelles, must not lead us to believe that, in spite of the grip of this miserable heresy on the very life of the people, few of St. Dominic's converts had the courage to persevere. Neither their names nor their number will ever be known to us here, for they are written, not in the Registers of the Inquisition, but in the Book of Life.

Several questions naturally arise from the facts just stated, which may very briefly be discussed here. First, by whom was St. Dominic authorised to reconcile heretics? "As is the case to-day, at that epoch also the Pope alone, one of his Legates, or the bishop in his diocese could reconcile and impose public penitences. St. Dominic had received his powers as Penitentiary either from Bishop Foulques or from one of the Legates; as later he received them from the Abbot of Citeaux in the case of Pons Roger."

It may well be noted in passing that St. Dominic has often been styled, even by those who should know better, "the

first Inquisitor." It cannot be said too often or too clearly that St. Dominic was not and never could have been an Inquisitor, if only (to quote Père Mandonnet, O.P.) for the simple reason that the Roman Inquisition did not in his lifetime exist; nor after it came into existence was it officially placed in the hands of the Dominican Order until 1233, twelve years after the death of its founder. There is, therefore, not the slightest need to discuss the question of the Inquisition in reference to St. Dominic; it is indeed manifestly impossible to do so.

Another question is that of the penances imposed by the Legates and their delegates. One of the most common was the obligation, already noted, on the part of the penitent, to wear two white crosses stitched to the front of the dress in such a way that they should be clearly visible to all. What was the origin of this penance, and why were two crosses imposed?

"In the Middle Ages those pilgrims who had made a vow to take part in a Crusade to the Holy Land fastened a cross to their right shoulder as a sign of their engagement." This practice was adopted by those who pledged themselves to the Crusade against the Albigenses in 1208, but to distinguish themselves from the Crusaders to the Holy Land they wore the cross on their breast. The heretics, to disguise themselves, also adopted this fashion of wearing a cross. It was for this reason that St. Dominic and the Bishop of Toulouse ordered those whom they reconciled to wear two crosses, "such as were apparent and humiliating."

This is one explanation, but as P. Balme points out, it is not wholly satisfactory, because the penance of the two crosses was inflicted some years before there was any question of the Albigensian Crusade. "It is evident," he says, "that this penitence was already in force in virtue of an established custom, or of some contemporary Penitential." But it is certainly possible that reconciled persons were distinguished from Crusaders to the Holy Land by the double cross. This penance must not be confounded with

civil penalties, the *Peines Infamantes*, which had long formed part of the statute law of France, and which were renewed and reinforced by Louis XIV. as late as 1670. Such were the *carcan*, or iron necklet, which was worn by a criminal with the record of his crimes fastened to it, as he was exposed in a public place; and the *marque*, or branding with a red-hot iron upon the forehead or chest; punishments which, with others too terrible to describe, were "in force up to our own times."[1] Those who fall back upon the "tortures of the Inquisition" as a final argument against Catholicism either forget or are ignorant of the fact that the laws of all civilised countries up to the days of our grandfathers—in some cases later—were enforced with pains and tortures to which those of the Inquisition, "the methods of the age," were mild and merciful. After all, it is not so long ago since sheep-stealing and the theft of five shillings were punished in England by hanging! If the twentieth century is to sit in judgment upon the methods of the thirteenth, it must first understand them and the spirit of the age which it presumes to criticise.

One other point may be noted, the extreme youth of the women when they were forced to become heretics. Na Segura was only ten when she received the *Consolamentum*. Another witness at Toulouse in 1246, Na Condors, tells the Inquisitors that she too was "hereticated" at the age of ten by her own mother. The cruelty of the heresiarchs in thus forcing children into a life of hideously unnatural austerity, by isolating them from all family ties and the prospect of a happy domestic life is in keeping with the tenets of this truly diabolical heresy. No girl of ten could understand what the sacrifice imposed by the *Consolamentum* implied, and it was often her own parents who forced her to submit to it. The abuses to which this life against nature, unsustained by any sacramental grace, or even by prayer—for the Catharists did not pray—might, and often did lead, can be imagined but

[1] Such were the "scold's bridle" and the "ducking-stool," to be found in every parish of mediæval England, to say nothing of the stocks, and far more cruel pillory.

not described. Yet it was from such materials as this that Dominic founded Prouille.

The pilgrim of to-day may go to Mas Stes. Puelles, which is well worth a visit, by train from Castelnaudary, a journey of about twenty minutes. But, as often happens, the village is nearly a mile from the station, lying picturesquely along the crest of a long low wooded hill. The highest point, to the right, is to-day occupied by the ubiquitous windmill, which stands with waving arms above the ruins of the old castle. Just below rises the open octagonal Toulousain tower of the little low-roofed church, which dates probably from the eleventh century. Along the slopes and on the ridge of the hill the old tiled roofs of the little village, red and grey and brown peep out among the heavy trees. Here and there traces of fortifications are visible.

A winding way leads from the broad road that passes through the village up the hill to the church, before which is a square *Place*, evidently contrived in an angle of the old walls, which fall away sharply on one side. In the middle stands a tall mission-crucifix beneath the shadow of a great tree. An ideal place for open-air preaching, it is possible, if not probable, that it was here Foulques and Dominic held that long-ago mission. The church forms one side of the square. Entering, through a many-pillared porch, very like that of Fanjeaux, which probably belongs to the late thirteenth century, one finds oneself in a low, rather dark, vaulted building, in no way remarkable architecturally, but by no means devoid of interest. The roof of the nave, with its curiously low vaulting, absolutely undecorated and untouched except by a modern attempt at stencilling here and there, is typical of the tiny village churches of Languedoc. The choir is probably of later date.[1]

The place was very still. All the men and many of the women were working in the fields, for it was the time of the vintage. The children were still in school. There was not

[1] It has been found impossible to obtain more exact information as to the date of the church of Mas Stes. Puelles.

a sign of life from the village, and the only sound was the buzzing of the flies outside in the hot afternoon sunshine, which streamed through the open door and the small painted windows, making quivering pools of purple, blue, and gold upon the uneven floor. Not even an old woman knelt in a dark corner, beads in hand. There was nothing but the peace of the deep shadows and coloured sunshine; the memory of the past; and that other, deeper peace which radiated from the Tabernacle upon the little altar. And this solitude was a thing so unusual—even in the France of to-day —that instinctively I wondered what the reason could be. I was enlightened later, after a long and fruitless search for a *café*; for after travelling since early morning even the most enthusiastic pilgrim grows weary. But in vain! there was no *café* at all, said the baker's wife, to whom I applied for direction, only an *auberge* or two, where one could get wine. But, having already passed these *auberges*, I declined this suggestion. Finally she said that her next door neighbour might perhaps be induced to make a cup of coffee. And this good-natured neighbour left her ironing, not only to make the coffee, but to bring it to me herself in a big glass at the long bare wooden table where I awaited it; and then, to my surprise, sat down opposite me on another bench, put her elbows on the table and her chin on her hands, stared very hard at me, and began to talk.

They did not, she said, have many strangers at Mas. For example, what was there to see? It was nothing but a poor village, not a town with fine shops like Toulouse. For her part she could not understand what a stranger like myself could possibly find to interest her in a place like this. I explained that I was on a pilgrimage to all the places which St. Dominic was known to have visited in these parts, and that he had been here, to Mas St. Puelles, and preached, probably, in this very church.

Her face darkened. "It would be well if he were in the country now!" she said bitterly. "I have heard he came to this place with Monseigneur Simon de Montfort,

but that was long ago!" She leant over the table and became suddenly confidential. "*Tenez*, madame," she said, "Mas is a bad place. There are very few *Croyants* here"—she used the word little knowing the different meaning it had in St. Dominic's day—"and the men do not go to Mass. You ask me why? I will tell you. It is because of the priests! It is they who are ruining France. Go thou," she added to her little girl who was listening open-mouthed, "and continue the ironing while I talk to Madame." The child reluctantly obeyed, and the mother began to pour out a tale, terrible enough if true, of a certain *Curé* in a distant village whose life, she declared, had given scandal to every one. Half-way through I stopped her. "Supposing," I said, "that all you say is true, let me ask you two questions: Among the apostles was there not one traitor? And how often did St. Peter deny our Lord?"

She stared in silence. "I do not argue what you say. I know nothing of the facts—if they are facts—one way or the other, but I do know this, that if all the priests in France were what you think this *Curé* to be it would not affect the Catholic Faith!"

"He was a bad man!" she said sullenly.

"But what has that to do with the goodness of Almighty God, or with the people in this place, or with your own soul? He was not your priest. He had nothing to do with this village. And who are you to judge him? If one apostle in twelve betrayed our Lord and another denied him thrice, how can we to-day be surprised that one man in ten thousand yields—if he did yield—to temptation and fell from grace? When you die, do you suppose Almighty God will ask you about this *Curé?* Will you be judged for his sins? You do not need me to tell you that, you know it as well as I do! But because a priest you have never seen, sins, are you to stay away from Mass?"

She was still silent. "And who are we, the greatest of sinners ourselves, to judge a priest and his great temptations," I added, "of which we can have no idea?"

The woman looked up at me curiously, and said with the most delicious *naïvèté*: "But, Madame, I am not really a very great sinner! True, I do not often go to Mass, nor does my husband, who after all is *un homme comme les autres*. There are many worse than I! And as for Madame, I should scarcely have thought . . . ."

She was too polite to finish the sentence, but seemed relieved to find that I was laughing. Then I told her how I had travelled over almost all the south of France, and a great part of the centre, and had met and known so many priests that I could not even remember their names. And everywhere it was the same; all were persecuted, many almost penniless because they gave all they had to the Church and to the poor; hundreds were living in disguise under police supervision—not because they were criminals, but because they were religious; all, without exception, living holy lives of the purest self-sacrifice; the salt by which the apostate country was preserved from entire corruption. It was by her priests that France would stand or fall; by them that she should be judged; not by the sin of one among them—if it were a sin—but by the sanctity of those of whom their country was not worthy. "France is lost, but if ever she is to be saved it will be by her priests!"

She did not speak for a few minutes, while I drank the now cold coffee, and then said almost humbly: "I did not know all that. I shall tell my husband what you have said. And," she added after another silence, "I will go to Mass." After that we talked for a long time, and I told her of some of the places I had seen, and how I hoped to write a book about my pilgrimage. Should I say anything about Mas Stes. Puelles? she asked. "But yes, most certainly," I told her, not mentioning, however, that I hoped to record our conversation. "Then send me a copy," she begged, "and, better still, come again and see me. For I do not deny," she remarked pleasantly, "that it has given me great comfort to talk to you and to hear what you have to say. After all, it is those who travel who know the most!

If Madame could only say to the others what she has said to me . . ."

As I hastily explained the impossibility of my doing anything of the kind I happened to glance over my shoulder at the open window near which we had been sitting, and saw for the first time a little group of about a dozen people, old men, women, and children, among whom I recognised my hostess's little daughter! There had been another conference at Mas Stes. Puelles after all!

Later on I made my way between the blackberry hedges, by rough grassy paths through the maize fields, to the top of the ridge, itself a spur of the Montagne Noire. The sun was setting, and the beautiful hilly country was bathed in golden light. Only the village below lay in deep shadow. It was interesting to find evident traces of a Roman encampment up here; perhaps the very site of the martyrdom of the Holy Maidens fifteen centuries ago. As I passed through the village again to catch the last train, lights were twinkling from the picturesque, tumble-down houses; the little church was locked and silent. Again and again I turned as I walked down the broad white highroad. The harvest moon was rising, and in its pale light the little village lay transfigured. The beautiful ruins of the old castle, its crumbling walls and hollow towers pierced with broken openings that once were windows rose clear above the heavy trees; the open octagonal tower of the church below it stood out against the luminous sky. And above all the old mill stretched forth its now motionless arms, a great cross upon the white shield of the moon.

But as I stood in the shadowy silence broken only by the chirp of a few belated crickets, looking up at the village, I was thinking as much of the woman who lived there as of the magical beauty of the autumn night. For something which I ought to have said, and which I had remembered too late—something which would have appealed to the heart of any French mother, haunted me persistently: "Suppose that priest had been your son? How would you have judged him then?"

VIII

SAISSAC AND THE MONTAGNE NOIRE

It is well for those who love peace and silence that the Montagne Noire is comparatively unknown. Now that all the beauty-spots of the Alps and Pyrenees, even the most remote, boast of at least one electric-lighted modern hotel, with daily automobile excursions to all the neighbouring "points of interest"; when the mountains of Auvergne and even the greater part of the grim Cevennes, by means of motors or railway, are easily accessible, it is unspeakable joy to remember that at least one of the most beautiful and picturesque districts of France is practically unknown and utterly unspoilt.

For the solitary traveller who can dispense with lifts and electric light, who is more or less indifferent to what is popularly termed "modern comfort," who is not afraid to rough it to a certain extent in a village inn (where he is at anyrate generally sure of cleanliness, simple food, and a comfortable bed), the Montagne Noire is an ideal place for a holiday, and I can imagine few districts more delightful for a walking-tour. The air is delicious; the hills, though steep and long, are quite within the powers of a very average pedestrian; the roads, like most French roads, are good; and the views—the views must be seen to be appreciated! Here and there the scenery reminds one curiously of that of the Jura, though on a smaller scale. Yet, perhaps, few districts of France are less known to the English-speaking traveller. Toulouse is a great railway centre, and on one of the direct routes to the Pyrenees; a comparatively limited number of

people seem to have heard of the mediæval glories of Carcassonne, and visit the fortifications of the High City. But who goes to Saissac, or to St. Papoul, with its beautiful twelfth-century cathedral and cloisters, its two great castles, of which one lies in picturesque ruins? Who knows the fine old fortified town of Conques-sur-Orbiel, with the terrible dungeons beneath its pair of *châteaux-forts?* or Malves with its prehistoric menhir and its curious, painted castle chambers? The Montagne Noire, which perhaps suffers a little from its name, is full of undiscovered treasures, speaking from the point of view of an English traveller; it is a veritable *pays inconnu*, full of interest from the historical and archæological standpoints; and for the artist it teems with the loveliness of the wildest nature, sometimes savage and grim, where precipices of naked rock rise sheer out of dark and gloomy pine forests as grand, if not as extensive, as anything in the Schwarzwald; sometimes melting into exquisite tenderness in wide vistas of distant hills and plain stretching far to a boundless horizon.

St. Dominic came to Saissac in 1206–7, when a celebrated heretic noble was lord of its formidable castle. It was to Bertrand de Saissac that, in 1194, the terrible Roger II., Count of Carcassonne and Beziers, the man who had long and successfully held his own between the rival powers of Toulouse and Aragon, had committed on his death-bed the guardianship of his young son, Raymond Roger of Trencavel, who was to perish so miserably in 1209 after the siege of Carcassonne. Bertrand de Saissac, of whom we read frequently in the chronicle of Vaux-Cernay, was a sectary of unusual bitterness, and as was generally the case where the Seigneur was a Catharist, the fear of him was upon the people of the little town. He does not seem to have tried to prevent St. Dominic from coming to Saissac; and it is even possible he allowed the Conferences to be held in the hall of the castle—not from any consideration for the Catholic missionary; but there can be little doubt that St. Dominic preached in the church which rises just behind the castle, a curious, barn-like structure, with

small round windows, its heavy square tower pierced high up with a couple of narrow lights. The only written record we have of St. Dominic's passage here is the testimony given before the Inquisitors at Toulouse in 1246 of a certain P. Jaule, who had heard the Saint preach at Saissac forty years earlier, and who declared that though he had not at the time been converted to Catholicism, the memory of Dominic's burning words so haunted him that three years later he had confessed to "Brother Dominic," had been absolved by him, and received letters of reconciliation. His perseverance was doubtful, hence his appearance at Toulouse before Bernard de Caux. At the time when this man gave his evidence, Brother Dominic, whom he had seen and known as a humble friar, had been canonised for thirteen years.

Saissac is easily reached by the light railway which runs from Bram to St. Denis through some of the loveliest and wildest scenery of the Montagne Noire. The journey takes about an hour, and in itself amply repays those who undertake it on account of the marvellous views of the great plain which can be had from different points on the line. The country is perhaps seen at its best on a still grey day in early autumn. The second stop is at St. Martin-le-Vieil, an old fortified village, rising in terraces upon the steep slant of a wooded hill, above a clear and rapid little river which rises in the hills above Saissac, and is spanned at intervals by picturesque single-arch stone bridges. The railway line winds round the desolate hillsides, from which the harvest has long been reaped, and climbing higher and higher passes over a ridge from which on both sides the plain stretches away to the horizon, dim, misty, illimitable as the sea. Here and there are sombre woods of fir and pine; the rocky banks are clothed with purple-grey withering heather, and the golden-orange of the dying bracken. Now and then, for a moment, a long shaft of pale light from the hidden sun darts from the clouds and points a luminous finger to some far-away spot on the mysterious plain. The picture is in exquisite, almost unrelieved half-tones of black and grey, silver and pearl.

The air, after the sultry heat from which we have so long been suffering this summer,[1] is keen, cold, invigorating.

The train is still mounting. After winding through a chain of beautiful gorges clad with pines it stops in an open space above an avenue of yellowing elms. Below this is a village perched dizzily upon the brow of a steep cliff—Saissac at last.

Saissac, the ancient *Saxiacum* of the Romans, is situated in a most commanding position, round the inner edge of a rocky, horseshoe-shaped gorge. From the centre of this projects, at a lower level, a bare, triangular promontory of rock, separated from the wooded cliffs to right and left by a couple of deep and foaming mountain torrents which meet and mingle beyond its apex. On this promontory stand the church and castle of Saissac, the latter in a position which, in mediæval days, was unusually strong, just at the point of the triangle, where the ground falls away almost precipitously on two sides to the noisy waters below. However, two years after St. Dominic's mission here the place was stormed by Simon de Montfort, Bertrand de Saissac expelled, and the castle bestowed upon a heroic knight, Bouchard de Marly, De Montfort's brother-in-law. From the village street above, between the ancient stone houses, there is a beautiful view across this rocky, ruin-set spur—a vista of limitless plain, framed in frowning rocky headlands dark with pine-woods. There are no cypresses here! The character of the country has completely altered. The village itself, however, like so many of those associated with the name of St. Dominic, is probably not much changed since the days when he walked here, and the Crusaders poured down its single street. Stone stairways, worn by the feet of countless generations of workers, lead down the steep slopes to the terraced gardens on the sides of the gorge; the old houses seem literally sinking heavily into the earth from their weight of age. Saissac from an artist's standpoint is certainly one of the jewels of the treasury of the Montagne Noire.

[1] 1911.

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

THE RUINED CASTLE OF SAISSAC

By broken crumbling steps and winding stone-set paths I reached the church, which contains nothing of special interest beyond its memories of St. Dominic. Just beyond it, across a stretch of grass, rises the outer wall of the castle, and there, had I not been able to slip through a broken, but firmly locked door, my pilgrimage would have ended. This wall, of massive grey stone, is evidently only a remnant of the ancient defences, which must necessarily have been doubly strong on this, the most accessible side. Standing on the thick grass of the courtyard, the castle itself rose grim and decidedly forbidding before me.

> "Here stood a shattered archway plumed with fern,
> And here had fallen great part of a tower."

Through the wide ruined portal I passed into the roofless keep, paved with close turf and ceiled by the grey sky. It was curiously lonely, though the village was not very far away. Shut in among these huge walls one's first impulse was to look round and walk out again. At the far end of the keep was a descent through a breach in the massive wall which, by no stretch of description, could be called a staircase. It was a sort of clay slide about six feet deep, at the bottom of which was another great roofless hall, from which opened long, low, vaulted passages half choked with slippery clay, and on either side of these yawned grim, black dungeons. At the end of one of these passages stood a lofty hollow tower, broken, and open to the sky, with a significantly deep dark hole below it, either a well or an *oubliette*. Everywhere through the breaches in the walls one caught enchanting glimpses of the view across the valley. Certainly these robber-counts of old knew how and where to build their castles!

Finally, after climbing down from storey to storey, each floored with turf and furnished with brambles, I reached what was evidently the last, a wide open space enclosed by lofty walls, at the further end of which towered a couple of bastions. Turning, I was amazed at the size and magnificence of the

crumbling pile above. Wide window-spaces gaped high in the walls of the floorless upper rooms—for from this side there could be no fear of a stray arrow finding its way within the defences; the great castle rose superbly tier above tier, desolate, silent, and forsaken. The sense of oppression, of loneliness, was almost overwhelming. Just as I had realised the fact that it would be almost impossible to get out the way I had got in, happening to glance up I met the eyes of a face watching me at one of the upper windows, a face which, as I looked, instantly vanished.

It was doubtless the custodian of the castle, who had seen my unceremonious entrance, or perhaps a tramp; but I was under the very strongest impression that the window out of which that face had looked belonged to a room which did not happen to possess a floor! It was clearly impossible to return through those terrible dark slippery passages, and yet . . . it was the only way out. No! there was another,—a low postern door close beside me, half hidden by the brambles, a door which looked as if it was locked, but was not, thanks surely to St. Dominic, who doubtless had passed through it himself; and the next moment I was on the rocky path outside the walls, the postern had closed with a clang, and the village was in sight.

Later on I followed that path as it wound between its old walls from the river up the face of the precipice, above which the bastions frowned so grandly. It was doubtless the way by which reinforcements and provisions were brought to the castle in time of siege.

Saissac, which on a clear day can be seen from Prouille, is well worth a visit, for besides the castle it contains other valuable historical monuments. But, as one cannot always be sure of finding the postern door open, it is perhaps wiser not to explore the castle alone!

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

THE ROCK AND CASTLE OF FOIX

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

THE "MASSIF DU CASTELLA," WITH CATHEDRAL TOWER, PAMIERS

IX

THE VANISHED CASTLE OF PAMIERS

PAMIERS to-day is like a city of the dead. Grass grows between the stones of its bye-streets, where the very passers-by seem hushed and depressed; the fine old mediæval timbered houses, many of which are of interesting and quaint design, no longer echo with life, with voices, with laughter, but stand silent, shuttered, grim. Even the *Place* is quiet except on market days. Such at least are the impressions of the visitor. There are a few factories on the outskirts of the town, but these scarcely enliven it.

Pamiers, which numbers at present some 11,000 inhabitants, is picturesquely situated at the foot of a line of low hills, a spur of the Plantaurel range, itself an offshoot of the Pyrenees. Here lie the sunny vineyards whence comes the white wine for which the neighbourhood is justly famous. Except for that, Pamiers to-day is forgotten. Yet history has been made here in days of long ago. Its splendour, its glory, lie in the past, and centre round the low wooded hill, the "*Massif du Castella*," on which the grand old castle, sister of unrivalled Foix, once towered above the rushing Ariège. For the Castle of Pamiers was once one of the strongest in Languedoc, and its name was writ large in mediæval chronicles, beside that of its sister-stronghold, the home of that terrible race which, from the beginning of the eleventh to the end of the fourteenth century, ruled the country with sword and fire. The study of genealogy is always interesting, but that of the Counts of Foix, inextricably mixed with that of the great houses of Toulouse, and Trencavel of Carcassonne and Beziers, closely connected with the vicomtal families of Nîmes and Albi, and more

distantly with the royal line of Aragon, is fascinating if only from the difficulty one experiences in disentangling its various Rogers, Bernards, and Raymonds, whose dates are sometimes so uncertain, the details of whose lives are so contradictory, that the task of reconciling them is almost hopeless! The house of Foix, which had given so many Catholic champions to the Midi, and founded the historic Cistercian Abbey of Boulbonne, had fallen away from the Faith in the twelfth century; and in 1207, the year when St. Dominic first came to Pamiers, Raymond Roger *le Batailleur*, the representative of the ancient line (1188-1223), was an open and cruel persecutor of the Church. Of him we shall speak more fully when we visit Foix, but it is well to remember at the outset that he was one of the three most important of the nobles who took an active part—on the Albigensian side—in the terrible wars of the Crusade, and that he was certainly the most barbarous foe with whom the Catholics had to deal.

This man's great-grandfather, Roger II., a celebrated Crusader, on his return from Palestine in 1111, founded the Castle of Apamiers—so-called, says a French writer, in memory of the Syrian palm-trees[1]—not far from the ancient Abbey of St. Antonin de Frédélas, but separated from it by the river. As was so often the case when a castle was built, a town speedily grew up beneath its walls, and thus Pamiers, in the early years of the twelfth century, sprang into existence. The castle, which crowned a low, round hill, almost surrounded by the swift waters of the racing river below—the beauty of these Pyrenean rivers in their upper courses is marvellous—entirely commanded not only the town, but much of the surrounding country.

Pamiers is full of churches, whose dark portals and dim aisles are redolent of memories. One of the most modern, Notre Dame du Camp, built in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is extraordinarily impressive with its imposing and altogether Toulousain façade—an immense battlemented

[1] Another derivation is from the word Pam = quarter. The town possessed six Pams.

wall rising high above the roof of the nave, and flanked on either side by a lofty crenelated bell-tower. Like a ghost of the past, rising above a wide stretch of rich, red-brown tiled roofs, the slender tower of the once celebrated Cordelier Church lifts its graceful head. Built in 1512, destroyed less than a century later by the madness of the Huguenots, to-day a piteous ruin, all that remains of this church is the lofty grey tower and the fragment of a great wall, both of which have been incorporated into the fabric of a convent chapel. Here, too, is the ruined church of the Dominicans. Walking through the streets one continually comes across a blank, desolate space from which some large building has evidently been torn down, never to be replaced. Here, close to the Cathedral, is the once famous Jesuit College, a vast and imposing building, to-day used as a *Lycée*, while their great church has become a dancing-hall. Big posters are pasted over the western door; a troupe of comedians, I read, were shortly to give an entertainment here. France has turned many of her churches and some of her most beautiful ecclesiastical buildings into schools, into mills, into factories, into forage-stores. In some she has stabled horses; in some she has held Exhibitions. It is reserved for Pamiers to turn a church into a music-hall! Not even the Revolution can go beyond that.

The present Cathedral of St. Antonin, on the slope of the castle hill, is the third church which has stood on the same site. Dating from the second half of the seventeenth century, it contains no architectural remains of the time of St. Dominic except the square, carved capitals of the porch—itself of the late thirteenth century—which are of the twelfth. This porch, with its lovely pointed arch, and the fine octagonal tower of the Cathedral, are all that is left of the second building. The first foundation of the Abbey of St. Antonin was on the other side of the Ariège, but in the twelfth century, doubtless for greater security, a new abbey was built close to the castle. Its church was originally much smaller than the present Cathedral. But with the growth of Pamiers it was found

necessary to enlarge it. For so many people came to the castle on political matters, and to the abbey on affairs of religion, that the first church was found insufficient, and when in the thirteenth century it was rebuilt, a beautiful Lady Chapel was added. The old porch, with its battered tracery and delicate outlines, is completely out of keeping with the spacious building, half Gothic, half Romanesque, which after the destruction of the second church of St. Antonin by the Huguenots in the sixteenth century was built on its site in 1658-89. The episcopal palace hard by dates from the eighteenth century. The first Bishop of Pamiers (now a much more extensive see than formerly) was appointed in 1295, by Pope Boniface VIII.

These things I learned from a kind and courteous old Canon who, coming out of the sacristy after his Mass, took the trouble to show me everything of interest in the Cathedral, particularly the old carved capitals between which St. Dominic and Simon de Montfort had so often passed. For St. Dominic was here in Pamiers several times, in the days when it was a feudal city, and the steep, winding way to the castle echoed daily to the clatter of horses' hoofs and the jingling of accoutrements; when Albigensian heresiarchs, with their pale faces and long black robes, jesters in motley, great nobles in shining armour on richly caparisoned steeds, followed by a gorgeous train of men-at-arms; beggars in their rags, palmers with shell and staff, brown-faced, honest-eyed peasants—the one changeless element in the ever-changing social system of France—when all these, and a hundred others passed up and down from city to castle, to sue or beg, to preach or feast, to counsel or to quarrel at the *château-fort* of Raymond Roger, Count of Foix and Pamiers.

"And where is the castle now?" I asked the old priest, as we stood outside the cathedral porch under the fast-yellowing trees of early autumn. He pointed out the path which led up to the top of the low hill on the side of which the Cathedral nestles "You will not find even the ruins," he answered, "all has been demolished by degrees. On the site

there is an open space with trees, and a bandstand! Oh yes! it is the favourite promenade of Pamiers; but there is not so much as a stone of the castle. In my student days I remember as a boy here, fifty years ago, there were one or two old buttresses of brick at the side of the road which once led to the keep, but they have long ago disappeared. Of the castle of Pamiers nothing remains but a memory!"

It was in January 1207, directly after the foundation of Prouille, while St. Dominic was devoting all the time he could spare from his beloved convent to evangelising the neighbouring country, that the Bishop of Osma decided to return for a while to his diocese in Castile, from which he had been nearly three years absent. He chose the road which led across the Pyrenees by way of Pamiers and Foix. It was arranged by the Legates to hold a final Conference in the former town, at the request of the Count of Foix.

"It was the last of which particulars have come down to us; the last, too, in which the Bishop of Osma took part. St. Dominic, who was never again to meet in this world his Bishop and beloved Father, accompanied him as far as Pamiers." Both probably realised that the parting would be final. Dominic was to lose the friend whose wise and tender counsel and encouragement had never yet failed him. They doubtless travelled together from Prouille by way of Montréal and picturesque Mirepoix; thence to Pamiers across the foot-hills of the Pyrenees. And this last journey of the two friends, spiritual father and son, one so soon to receive his reward, the other at the outset of a new and magnificent apostolate, cannot but remind us of that other final journey to Jordan of Elias and Eliseus of old. Well might St. Dominic have prayed that the mantle of the saintly bishop might fall upon his shoulders; well might he grieve that his master and best friend was so soon to be taken from him. For they two had reached the parting of the ways, which, dividing at Pamiers, were never again to unite on earth.

At the Abbey they met the Bishop of Toulouse, already

Dominic's faithful friend and helper; Navarre, the newly-elected Bishop of Couserans and many abbots and prelates. Here too was Maître Arnauld de Campragna, a noted cleric of Pamiers who, though favourable to the heretics, had nevertheless been unanimously chosen as arbiter of the Conference. This man, at its close, "gained by the holiness [of the missionaries] and the force of their arguments, offered in open court himself and his goods without reserve, to the Bishop of Osma; and, faithful to his word, lost no time in consecrating himself to God in the abbey of his native town, where he held important offices for the rest of his life. He became the friend of Foulques of Toulouse, and of Dominic, associating himself till his death with all the struggles of the Church against heresy." In 1221 we find him at Rome with his Bishop, in the company of St. Dominic, who just before his death was preparing to celebrate the second Chapter-General of his Order. Together they conversed intimately as to the interests of the Saint's beloved foundations at Prouille and Toulouse, and history has handed down to us an act in which Maître Arnauld de Campragna in Rome is witness of the donation to St. Dominic of the church of Fanjeaux, made by the Bishop of Toulouse.

The Count of Foix, Raymond Roger *le Batailleur*, was also at Pamiers, for here in the great hall of his castle the Conference was to be held.

Raymond Roger was a man of war. Pierre de Vaux Cernay calls him a "detestable traitor, a cruel persecutor and enemy of the Church." Without openly professing the Catharist doctrines, he encouraged and fostered heresy in his dominions. In 1204 he had been witness, at Fanjeaux, of the "heretication" of his sister, Esclairmonde, by Guilabert de Castres. His wife and one of his two sisters were bigoted Catharists, the other sister a Waldensian. The count's vassals followed the example of his family. Waldensians, mingled with Albigensians, were very numerous in the country, and for this reason the discussion turned principally upon their doctrines. "These men were bad," says Vaux-Cernay, "but

compared with the other heretics they were far less perverse, for they agreed with us in many things, and only differed in a few points." As a Dominican writer of our own day has well put it: the Waldensians "never meant to be heretics."

The discussions were conducted with clearness and vigour by the Bishop of Osma. The Waldensians were not only more accessible, but far more sincere than the Catharists. The two sects lived side by side in the same hatred of the Church. But their respective beliefs were absolutely divergent, and during this very year (1207) we find the Catharist heresiarch Isarn de Castres conducting a public controversy with the Waldensian leader, Bernard Prim, in the *Grand' Place* of Laurac, thereby proving, says M. Giraud, that so far from being the same, these two heresies fought against each other. We hear again of Waldensians persecuting Catharists — who were, after all, "only Europeanised Manichæans of a dangerous type"— and living in perfect accord with Catholics. This important fact was realised by the Inquisitors, who well knew the difference between the two sects; and their registers are full of questions "*Super crimine hæresis et Valdensiæ.*" At the close of the Conference, Durand de Huesca, the Waldensian leader, and his companions, threw themselves at the feet of the Bishop, confessing their sins, "filled with deep and wholesome contrition for their errors." Durand, "in the enthusiasm of his newly-found faith, proposed to go about with several companions, preaching the Gospel after the custom of the Waldensians." Thus came into existence the body of men to whom Pope Innocent III. gave the name of *Poor Catholics*,[1] who in their organisation, dress, and manner of life "retained nearly all the hierarchical features of Waldensianism. . . . This roused the opposition of the higher clergy, and . . . from the year 1212 onwards the movement lost in favour and influence, and was swallowed up by the newly-born mendicant Orders."[2]

[1] *Pauperes Catholici*, to distinguish them from the Waldensian, *Pauperes de Lugdano.*

[2] See article in *Columbia* (Fribourg), "*Die Katholischen Armen*," May 1912.

Although Raymond Roger at the beginning of the Conference had shown himself outwardly impartial, neither he nor his family allowed themselves to be convinced or influenced by the noble example of the converts of Pamiers. To the end they persevered in their fatal obstinacy, though on his death-bed the Count of Foix made at least one act of reparation.[1] It was during this Conference that Esclairmonde, breaking into the discussion in favour of the Catharists, called forth the celebrated and daring response of Fr. Etienne de Metz, one of St. Dominic's first companions: "Madame, go back to your spinning-wheel! It is unseemly for women to meddle in such matters as these!"

Puy Laurens tells us that the Albigenses "were convinced, even in the opinion of our enemies. To prove this I will relate," he continues, "what I heard Pons Adhémar de Rodelle, a knight full of wisdom, say to Dom Foulques of Toulouse. 'We could not have believed it possible,' he began, 'that Rome had so many good arguments against these people!' 'Do you not see,' replied the Bishop, 'how weak their objections are?' 'Certainly,' answered De Rodelle. 'Why, then,' continued the Bishop, 'do you not expel them from your territories?' 'We cannot,' said he; 'we have been brought up with them, we have relations among them, and we see them living honest lives.' It is thus," concludes Puy Laurens sadly, "that falsehood, in the guise of pure living, deceives the ignorant."

The Conference of Pamiers ended, Don Diego and his dear son Dominic bade each other a final and touching farewell. St. Dominic returned to Prouille, and the aged Bishop, on foot, staff in hand, crossed the Pyrenees and the country of Castille with great and terrible fatigue. It was winter-time, and on his arrival at Osma it was evident that he was reduced to the last extremity. "And thus," writes Blessed Jordan of Saxony, "finishing his mortal life on the heights of sanctity, he went to receive the glorious recompense of his good works,

[1] See Chap. XXI.

and, laden with merits, passed through the gate of death into the *opulent repose* of eternity."

In December 1211, we find St. Dominic again at Pamiers, to receive a grant of lands for Prouille. It was possibly on this occasion that a beautiful incident narrated by Gérard de Frachet took place. "Blessed Dominic at that time was often forced to cross the river Ariège. One day it happened that as the Saint, in the midst of the river, lifted his robe above the water, the books which he bore on his breast slipped and tumbled into the stream. Blessing God for the accident, Dominic came to the house of a good woman who habitually gave him hospitality, and who held him in great veneration on account of his holiness. When he told her of the loss of his books she was greatly afflicted.

"'Do not take the matter so hardly,' said the Saint; 'we must bear patiently what God judges best for us, against our own will.' A few days later it happened that a man went fishing at the exact spot where the books had fallen. He cast his hook, and lo! thinking he had caught a great fish he drew them from the water, as safe as if they had been kept in a cupboard; a fact all the more marvellous in that nothing . . . could have preserved them from contact with the water. The pious woman received them with great joy, and at once returned them to the Blessed Father."

A third time Pamiers figures prominently in the story of St. Dominic's mission. In November 1212, Simon de Montfort convoked in general parliament the Bishops and nobles of his domains in the Castle of Pamiers, of which he had been the master since 1209. "His aim, after having purified the country from the foul heresy which had entirely corrupted it, was to re-establish righteous laws, and to implant customs favourable to the Christian religion and worship, with peace and security for all. For since for many years this region had been given over to rapine and pillage, the powerful oppressed the helpless; the strong tyrannised over the weak.

"The Count desired to restore laws and customs which

should not be infringed, so that on one hand the nobles should have right only to certain fixed revenues, and on the other the people themselves should live under the nobles' protection without being overwhelmed by immoderate taxation. To this end the assembly chose amongst its members twelve delegates, who swore on the Holy Gospels to draw up a code of law assuring as far as possible the liberty of the Church, and a better state of things for the country."

Of these twelve four were ecclesiastics, the Bishops of Toulouse and Couserans, a Knight Templar and a Hospitaller; four were French knights, and the remaining four inhabitants of the district, two knights and two citizens. The code thus drawn up was approved and sworn to by the whole assembly, the nobles and bishops present each appending his seal.

This was done on 1st December 1212 in the great hall of the castle at Pamiers. On the same day De Montfort placed his seal upon another charter by which he bestowed upon St. Dominic for the Convent of Prouille "a princely gift of rich lands" at Villasavary, Sauzens and Fanjeaux, including the two fields already mentioned. This, in the absence of proof-positive to the contrary, indicates clearly that St. Dominic was not only present, but that he figures among the assembled councillors to whose advice not only De Montfort, but the "arbiters, bishops, knights, and notables present listened most eagerly," on account of their deep admiration for him. "For," says Blessed Jordan of Saxony, "while the heretics and their adherents turned him into derision, the faithful in their devotion to Blessed Dominic . . . lavished the greatest veneration on him; the perfume of his holiness and the beauty of his life touched the heart of the greatest, and the archbishops, bishops, and prelates of that country held him in the highest honour."

Slowly I climbed the broad, pebble-paved way which winds beneath thick trees up the vanished castle gateway. At the top the trees open out, surrounding a flat, circular space paved with gravel—the actual site of the castle. There

in the middle was indeed the bandstand, an erection of concrete, also circular, raised from the ground, neatly railed in, and surrounded with large electric lamps. Immensely tall electric standards rose here and there among the lofty elms which dotted the open space, and amongst them still lingered the gas lamps of an earlier day. But neither lamps nor bandstand could spoil the perfection of the autumn colouring of the trees which ringed and roofed the circle, and thickly clothed the steep slopes of the hill. They stood there, gold, russet, and canary-yellow in the radiant morning sunshine which dappled the dust below with trembling pools of brightness, into which fell, with inaudible whisperings, one withered leaf after another.

Not a soul was in that charmed circle but myself; no human being was in sight. To the south, at the foot of the winding road, the Cathedral tower rose boldly from the trees against the clear pale blue of a late September sky. Through the boles of the elms was visible a wide and lovely prospect of sparkling water and green, fertile valley; of low vine-clad hillsides, and loftier purple summits in the middle distance, half-veiled by the autumn haze; silent sentinels, advance-guard of the mighty army which pressed behind from the horizon and overtowered them, the giant snow-clad peaks of the distant Pyrenees.

Behind me, through a tangle of shrubbery, glowed the red roofs of the town, rugged with chimneys, from each of which rose as from a censer a slender spiral of pale blue smoke from the wood-fire within. The fragrance of its burning was pungent in the crisp morning air.

Sitting down on one of the low curved stone benches placed at regular intervals round the magic circle, the past rose up before me. The silence was full of voices and sighing; the rushing river, the rustling trees, the twittering sparrows only accentuated it. And beyond all these:

> "A spirit haunts the year's last hours;
> Dwelling amidst these yellowing bowers
> To himself he talks."

Here, all in the brilliant sunshine, was a place of ghosts! Here, at night, when the concert was over, and the bandsmen had gathered up their instruments and gone home; when the last *bourgeois* family had trotted happily down the winding road, and the last pair of lovers had followed slowly in their wake; when the electric lights were turned out, and the place deserted by human kind, here in the silence, upon this wide ring of stone benches beneath the whispering elms, the very shades of those to whom the castle had once belonged, to whom its vanished walls were home, sat shrouded, speechless, sorrowful, and lived again their tragic past! Here came that mighty man Raymond Roger *le Batailleur* with his heretic wife and Esclairmonde, the apostate, and beside them, with burning eyes above their trailing black robes sat Guilabert de Castres and his fellow-heresiarchs. Here crowded knight and lady, noble and Paladin, hooded, veiled, bowed in silence, sitting in this wide circle on these very stone seats. . . . They were all there! To see them it was only necessary to close one's eyes. . . .

Something touched my hand, lightly as a feather, and I started. A single yellow leaf, fluttering from the branches above, lay in the dust at my feet, dead among the ashes of the Past!

X

THE PAINTED CHURCH OF ST. CECILIA AT ALBI

It may as well be admitted at once! We have no direct proof that St. Dominic was ever at Albi. But though the fact of his presence here may be taken for granted, we have in support of it much indirect evidence. There is first the unbroken and undisputed tradition of his presence at Notre Dame de la Drêche, that famous pilgrimage church a few miles away upon the banks of the Tarn; and if he was there he could certainly not have left Albi unvisited. The place had been so noted a stronghold of Catharism that though in his day it was no longer the principal seat of the heresy to which it had lent its name, it is scarcely possible that it would be passed over by the great missionary during his constant journeys in the neighbourhood. Again, not only is there a constant local tradition that he came here, but ancient MSS. of the diocese affirm that Guillaume de Pierre, Bishop of Albi from 1185–1227, was a personal friend of St. Dominic, that he received him three times at Albi, and that the Saint there preached to the heretics with inconceivable courage and resolution. These attestations, belonging to recognised classes of positive historical evidence, cannot lightly be disregarded.

Without any specially striking natural surroundings, Albi, in virtue of its marvellous Cathedral, to say nothing of the ancient archiepiscopal[1] palace and fortified river banks, is a treasure-house of beauty too little known. St. Bernard preached here in 1147, but was unable to stem the tide of Manichæan doctrines which was rapidly overwhelming the

[1] Albi was created an Archbishopric in 1676.

Midi. "The Lord Abbot," we are told, "was received with great demonstrations of joy, in which, however, he had little confidence, having heard so much evil of this people. The day after his arrival, the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, so many assembled to hear the Word of God that the Church [of St. Salvy] in spite of its size could not contain the crowd." After preaching an eloquent sermon the Saint asked the people to make their choice between the Church and heresy; whereupon "all the people answered that they held their errors in abomination, and that they received with joy the Word of God, and Catholic truth. 'Do penance,' cried Bernard, 'that those who have sinned may all return to the unity of the Church. But first let all those who are penitent lift their hands to Heaven in sign of faith and Catholic unity.' Then each raised his hand in transports of joy, and thus ended the sermon of St. Bernard."[1] In spite of this enthusiasm, however, these people of the Midi soon returned to their false belief, and the work was to do again from the beginning.

The first decisive blow was struck by the Church at the teaching of these sectaries in 1165 at the Council of Lombers, a town three leagues from Albi, where the Albigensian heresy was formally denounced, and hence, some have thought, arose the familiar name given to the French Manichæans of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But this is by no means certain. We have very few facts concerning the sect in Albi, in the time of St. Dominic, but in 1229, Raymond VII., Count of Toulouse, caused a certain Guillaume, a prominent heresiarch, and perhaps the Catharist "Bishop" of this town, to be burnt alive. "It is possible," says M. Giraud, perhaps the greatest authority on this question, "that Albi had at one time, more or less, precedence over the other heretical centres of the Midi, either by priority of foundation, or because it was more prosperous. But it is certain that in the thirteenth century nothing distinguished it from other towns."[2]

[1] *Life of St. Bernard*, ed. Vivès, t. viii. p. 224.
[2] Giraud, "*Cartulaire de N. Dame de Prouille*," Preface, p. cxxxiii.

Of Bishop Guillaume de Pierre, the friend of St. Dominic, who so bravely fought the heresy, the following story is told by Puy Laurens, a story whose sequel is as amusing as it is characteristic. The good Bishop was one night roused from a dream about one Guillaume Pierre de Bérens, a relation and namesake of his, whom he had seen dying, and endeavouring to throw himself into a great fire. While the Bishop, in the agony of his dream, in vain endeavoured to prevent De Bérens from destroying himself, he was urgently summoned to attend the deathbed of this very person. He made all haste, and after traversing the three leagues which separated him from his cousin's castle, was ushered into the presence of the sick man. Seeing him to be dying, he sat down by the bed, and answered the questions put to him by De Bérens as to the division of his inheritance. Having given his advice in this and other matters, the Bishop asked him in what church he wished to be buried. At first De Bérens dissimulated, but when pressed declared that he intended to be taken to the heretics before his death, to receive the *Consolamentum*. As the Bishop tried to dissuade him, his cousin remarked: "Do not trouble yourself, for if I could get there no other way I would drag myself thither on hands and knees." The prelate was reluctantly forced to abandon the question. The sequel to this story, so typical of the state of things in St. Dominic's day, is full of a certain grim humour.

The nobles and *bourgeois* of Albi begged their Bishop to hold a public controversy with a certain Maître Sicard, called *le Célérier*, who lived publicly as a *Parfait* at Lombers. Guillaume Pierre, after refusing several times, at last agreed lest his silence should be thought to proceed from fear, or to reflect upon the faith. The heretic being brought into his presence, the Bishop thus addressed him: "Sicard, you are my parishioner since you reside in my diocese; you are bound to declare your faith to me; and when I question you, you will simply answer Yes and No." To this Sicard agreed, and the Bishop continued: "Do you believe that Abel, slain by

his brother Cain; Noah saved from the deluge; Abraham, Moses, David, and the other prophets who lived before the birth of our Lord, are saved?" "No," replied the heretic, with great assurance. "Do you believe, then, that my relation, Guillaume Pierre de Bérens, recently dead, is saved?" "Certainly," replied Sicard, "for he died a Catharist." "Now," returned the Bishop, "I am going to tell you something, Sicard. You are just in the position of a physician of these parts who lately returned here after his studies with the title of doctor. Of two sick men for whom he was asked to prescribe, he declared that one would die the following night, and the other would recover. But, unfortunately for him, exactly the contrary happened; the man whom he had condemned recovered, and the other died! 'I see,' said the doctor, 'I must have read my books backwards! I shall now go back and study them again from the beginning!' Thus, Sicard, I tell you that you, too, have read your books backwards; you who condemn those to whom Holy Scripture bears witness, and who believe in the certain salvation of a man who all his life gave himself up to rapine and violence, and died unrepentant. You must henceforward read the right way, the which up till now you have certainly failed to do." With these words the Bishop withdrew, but the confusion of the heresiarch did not prevent him from continuing in his former errors. It is more than probable St. Dominic heard this story from the lips of Guillaume Pierre himself. It is an excellent illustration of the mingled stupidity, ignorance, and obstinacy so distinctive of the sectaries; qualities which even St. Dominic's patience and eloquence had not always—as at Verfeil—been able to overcome.

Perhaps one reason why Albi is but little visited by the ordinary traveller is the fact that it is rather out of the way, and not on any main line, though it is not far from that of the *Ligne du Midi*, between Paris and Toulouse. Alighting at Tessonières, Albi is reached by a branch line which there unites with that from Castres to the ancient city of Rodez in Aveyron, celebrated for the magnificent spire of its Cathedral.

Photo: Maison Aillaud, Albi

CATHEDRAL OF ST. CECILIA, ALBI
(eastern face)

Photo: Maison Aillaud, Albi

ANCIENT PARISH CHURCH OF ST. SALVY, ALBI

"Who has not seen the Cathedral of Albi and the steeple of Rodez has seen nothing," runs a local saying, at which we cease to smile when we have visited Albi.

Between this city and Tessonières the country is wild and desolate. To the north lies a long line of low hills, brown and dreary, on which is perched here and there a ruined castle, notably the curious remains of Castelnau de Lévis, whose extraordinarily lofty, slender watch-towers look in the distance like the shafts of factory chimneys built of grey stone. And then gradually, to the east, as a distant ship seems to rise gradually out of the sea, the huge bulk of the great cathedral looms across the plain, seeming more enormous than it actually is—and the sight of it at first takes away one's breath —by sheer lack of any contrasting landmark. It is dominating, compelling, glorious. As the train describes a wide curve, the dull-red fortress pile becomes every moment more imposing, while nearly 300 feet in the air rises the magnificent tower, begun at the close of the thirteenth century, and yet unfinished.

Albi itself is a sleepy little place, much like any other modernised mediæval French town, but even without its cathedral, whose fortifications extend for some distance along the Tarn, its history would clothe it with interest. The usual approach to the Cathedral, through a network of winding streets, brings one out in a wide *Place* from which the sweep of the eastern wall rises abruptly. And here one can only stand and marvel in silence. This enormous mass of Toulousain brick, rising straight and bare from the ground, protected all round by bastion towers, and only pierced high up by long narrow windows—for the openings below are mere loopholes—is surely a mediæval castle, a fortress, a dungeon? So perfectly has it been preserved that it looks as if finished yesterday, and yet the first stone was laid by Bishop Bernard de Castanet in 1282.[1] There is not a trace of decoration on

[1] The Cathedral was carefully restored on the original lines in the nineteenth century, under the direction of M. Viollet le Duc, and other eminent architects.

the grim walls, if one excepts the simple tracery at the head of the slender window-shafts; the whole building cries aloud: "I was built for defence!"

The enormous bulk strikes one first: then the massive simplicity of the towering fortress; lastly, the exquisite and harmonious proportions of the whole. "It suggests a sense of solidity, of duration, of resistance, such as is fit for the dwelling-place of the Most High . . . which would seem to defy all attack, and whose almost threatening character fills the soul with a mysterious sense of fear." It is unique among Cathedrals. Many of the great churches of this wonderland of mediæval architecture are fortress-like. Albi is a fortress.

Clinging to the southern wall, where it instinctively reminds one of a mass of waving creepers hanging from the side of a precipitous rock, is the beautiful entrance to the Cathedral, with its double porches connected by a long flight of shallow steps. The first of these porches is the gateway of Bishop Dominic of Florence, the celebrated Dominican Bishop of Albi from 1379–82, and again from 1392–1410, when he became Archbishop of Toulouse. It was he who received St. Vincent Ferrer during the Saint's memorable visit to the latter city. Crenelated and machicolated, this lovely piece of late fourteenth-century architecture hangs, a stone curtain, between a massive round battlemented tower of brick, the last trace of the ramparts which originally surrounded the mighty building, and the bare wall of the Cathedral. Against the delicate tracery of the tympanum beneath the pointed archway stands the statue of St. Cecilia crowned by angels, with St. Mary Magdalene on her right, and on her left St. Dominic presenting the kneeling figure of his son and namesake, the pious donor, Dominic of Florence. Among the many saints in the finely-wrought niches are St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas—to whom Bishop Dominic had a great devotion—and St. Peter Martyr.

Passing through this gateway one stands at the foot of a ripple of steps, fifty-one in all, leading up to the *baldacchino*

Photo: Maison Aillaud, Albi

CATHEDRAL, ALBI: THE CHOIR-SCREEN AND CALVARY (sixteenth century)

which forms the principal entrance to the Cathedral, a marvel of early sixteenth-century architecture; built in a happier day when men, little recking of the Huguenot outrages, had begun to believe that there was not the same need for massive walls of defence and fortified churches. Four lofty pillars, supporting a vaulted roof, blossom all over into loveliest carved foliage and delicate pinnacles, indescribably wrought, like Burmese ivories, frostwork transmuted into stone. And hence, looking west, one catches a glimpse of that overwhelming tower, which, like a lighthouse, dominates the city.

But the real sensation is yet to come. For the chief glory of the Cathedral of Albi lies in its breathless contrasts! Even the lace-like porch does not prepare a stranger for what is within. Pushing back the heavy curtain one stands amazed. Deep shadows, darkness, grim brick walls, mighty round columns are what one would naturally expect to see. And lo! all is light and colour and beauty, from the floor to the keystone of the pointed arches, and above them to the crown of the vaulted roof. The walls literally blaze with rainbow hues. Not a single inch of stone is left undecorated. And the sunshine, streaming in through the lofty windows, paints even the floor.

But after the first overwhelming moment the white marble of the choir-screen dawns on the eye, and for a time one is conscious of nothing else.

The Cathedral of St. Cecilia, like most of the great Southern Gothic churches, has no aisles. Its painted walls are honeycombed with chapels, and half-way down the 360 feet of its length it is divided by what I believe is generally conceded to be the most beautiful screen in France. It is a gem of the early Renaissance, delicate as embroidery, its once snowy marble mellowed by time to the hue of old ivory—in places to that of yellow wax. "Those workers of a byegone day," writes Prosper Mérimée, "have wrought in hard and brittle stone what in our own times we should scarcely dare to attempt in bronze and iron." Cardinal Richelieu, says

local tradition, actually touched some of the statues in the *Jubé* to assure himself they were of marble and not of wood, so delicately fine was their workmanship, and the chiselling of the shrines beneath which they stood. This dream in stone, supported by six niched and fluted pillars, was erected about 1500 by Cardinal Louis d'Amboise, and suffered more than any other part of the Church at the Revolution. Sixteen great statues and fifty-six small ones have disappeared from their niches in the exquisite façade, which is crowned by a magnificent Calvary.

It is this second contrast, the delicacy of the fairy-like Renaissance creation, rising pale and unrelieved beneath the glowing walls, with their straight severe lines and simple arches of thirteenth-century Gothic, which makes the interior, as well as the exterior, of St. Cecilia unique.

Through a doorway to the left one passes beneath the screen into the northern ambulatory. Here the paintings in the chapels—of which there are twenty-nine in the church altogether—are in many cases of great beauty. The enclosure of the choir defies description, as it stands, a vision of pale and delicate beauty beneath the painted, vaulted roof. Through a gateway of marvellous bronze tracery one gains access to the choir itself. Here again is contrast, for the 220 stalls are of polished black oak, entirely simple, while above them rises the white marble of the perfect walls, frosted and fretted into a thousand delicate designs. Through the open arches which surround the sanctuary glow depths of rich colour in the dim chapels beyond. Through the painted windows shafts of light lie in tinted pools upon the shining floor. This unique Cathedral is a mediæval *Te Deum* in stone!

A very fine view of the nave may be gained from the gateway leading into the ambulatory. The parish altar is placed against the western wall, in a wide space carefully railed in. This, a modern innovation, is the only jarring note in an otherwise perfect symphony of form and colour. The high altar in choir is of course invisible from the body of the

Photo: Maison Aillaud, Albi

ALBI: THE SOUTHERN AMBULATORY IN THE CATHEDRAL

church. Nevertheless, in spite of the railings, and also in spite of the great organ, with its 200 pipes, which was built in 1736 and which rises above the altar to the roof, the western wall is the frontispiece of this great illuminated missal. On two round towers, the space between which was barbarously cut into in 1693 to form the chapel of St. Clare, is unrolled the long scroll of frescoes of the Last Judgment and the torments of hell as these were understood in the late fourteenth century. Here are the distinct traces of the influence of the school of Giotto, for these frescoes, with many others in the church, were executed by Italians under the orders of the first Cardinal d'Amboise. The inscriptions upon the northern tower are painted on festoons which enwreath the various groups of "*dampnés*." The lettering, much defaced by time, is still, however, legible. Here are described in minute detail:

(1) *La Peine des orguilleus et orguilleuses.*

(2) *La Peine des envieus et envieuses.*

(3) *La Peine des yreus et des yreuses.*

(4) *La Peine des pigres et pigresses.* (This fresco was destroyed in 1693.)

(5) *La Peine des avaricieus et avaricieuses.*

(6) *La Peine des glotons et glotes.*[1]

(7) *La Peine des luxurieus et luxurieuses.*

The treatment of the Seven deadly Sins is evidently Dantesque. But from the choir gateway one sees only the general effect of these various torments, framed in the square Renaissance portal; two towers which seem as if hung with faded ancient tapestry of Gobelin hues of faint blue and green, stained here and there with rusty red, flecked with pale shadowy outlines, and barred by narrow scrolls of misty white. These painted towers seem to swim in a dim blue haze, through which they loom vague and indistinct, mysterious, unsubstantial, but entirely beautiful.

[1] "*Les glotons et glotes sont en une vallée ou a ung fleuve ort et puant au rivage duquiel a tables garnies de toualles très ordres et deshonnêtes ou les glotons et les glotes sont repeus de crapauls et abreuves de leaue puante du dict fleuve.*" The other inscriptions, which are even more forcibly expressed, are on the same lines.

The twenty-nine chapels are by no means of equal interest. From that of the Holy Rosary, formerly the chapel of SS. Cosmas and Damien, there has lately been removed to the Sacristies the principal art-treasure of this wonderful church, a late fourteenth-century triptych, a gem of the Primitive school, which though of Italian workmanship, was brought hither from Austria. From the central panel smiles Our Lady of the Chair, holding the Holy Child upon her knees, and in eight smaller panels are pictured the principal mysteries in the lives of the Virgin Mother and Divine Son. This masterpiece is so precious that in these troublous times it is thought wiser to keep it under lock and key than to expose it openly in the church; but it is devoutly to be hoped that it may one day be possible to restore it to its original position. In the chapel just opposite, on the wall above the altar, is an intensely pathetic sixteenth-century fresco of the Crucifixion. Behind the great Cross stretches a smiling Italian landscape, full of hills and rivers, and beneath it the words—whose beauty would be destroyed by modernising the spelling:

"*Home obstine, regarde le fontene*
Des doulces eaues du pardon du pechier.
Que fict jaillir es la terrestre plene
Jesus mourant por ta soif estanchier.
Cœur endurci, reampli d'oubly coupable
Des biens que le benin Seigneur t'a faicts
Va, reprends-toy, son amour pitoyable
Ingrat pecheur, absoudra tes forfaicts."

And below, four still more pathetic lines:—

"*Aspice mortalis, pro te datur hostia talis,*
Mortem Morte demo ne moriatur homo
Nescio quid pro te magis possim dare quam me
Dulcis amice, vides quos pro te porto dolores." [1]

[1] "Behold, O mortal, for thee what a hostage is given!
By death I take away death, so that man may not die.
I know not what more than myself I could have given for thee,
O sweet friend, thou seest what sufferings I bear for thee."

There is scarcely a chapel that will not repay careful study, notably that of St. Joseph in the northern ambulatory, formerly dedicated to the Holy Cross. It is filled with frescoes of the German School, of the Invention of the Cross, resembling a very similar series in Cologne. The whole chapel, of which the predominant tones are scarlet, black, and gold, glows with rich colour, and is perhaps, artistically, the most interesting in the Cathedral. It was decorated in the fifteenth century. The altar-piece of the Holy Family in this chapel originally belonged to the Dominican church in this town. For the Friars Preachers had a fine monastery at Albi, "where among the other religious they held the first place. On the Feast of the Holy Rosary, the Consuls of the town took part in the procession in robe and cap of State, preceded by the municipal band, in order publicly to recognise the sacred debt of the country to Our Lady and her servant, St. Dominic."

Space fails us even to mention more of the wonders of the Painted Cathedral. The roof, however, must not be forgotten. High overhead its marvellous frescoes glow as bright and pure as when Raphael's pupils painted them there 400 years ago. In 1510 the work begun eight years earlier under Cardinal Louis d'Amboise, and carried as far west as the choir-screen, was finished by his successor, Charles de Robertet. In the graceful outlines and exquisite colouring of the earlier figures is visible the inspiration of Perugino. It is the picture-book of the "Generation of Christ," this painted roof. From an azure sky gaze down the ancestors of the Mother of God, prophets, rulers, kings, mingling with bright-winged seraphim, while in the midst our Lady of the Annunciation receives the message of the Archangel. Beyond, to the western wall, stretches the pictured story of the Life and Passion of our Lord, mystery unrolling after mystery, until, at the end, Mary is crowned by her Son in Heaven.

Let us go out once more, and walking down the *Rue des Prêtres*, which opens opposite the great west door, gain a

unique view of the façade. The soaring, massive tower is here framed between the tumble-down, vine-clad houses which guard the narrow entrance. From every point of view, this great building is marvellous; it is impossible to say which is the most impressive. To the north lies the Archiepiscopal Palace, a vast, grim edifice of brick, forming part of the great fortress of the Cathedral, with bastions and ramparts extending along the bank of the Tarn. Originally the abode of the Viscounts of Albi, then of her Archbishops, it is to-day a museum. The same vandalism has been committed here as at Narbonne.

Many other interesting relics of the Middle Ages are there in Albi, some of which are written in the Book of the prophet Baedeker, while others must be discovered by the pilgrim. Perhaps the most appealing of these ancient monuments is St. Salvy, the original parish church, a grand old Romanesque building with a curious square tower like the lower part of the shaft of an Italian *campanile*. Here there is a beautiful twelfth-century cloister in which St. Bernard, as well as St. Dominic, may have walked. For though St. Dominic never saw the Painted Cathedral, he knew St. Salvy —he has surely preached there—he knew the river and the old bridge. The tradition is too strong to be put aside; and we must remember that, after all, oral testimony ranks only second to the written word.

On the whole the most satisfying view of the enormous mass of the Cathedral and Palace is gained from the old twelfth-century bridge, one of several which now cross the Tarn, built of brick—like everything else in Albi, which is reached from St. Cecilia by a succession of sloping paths among the ancient fortifications. Over this bridge passed Simon de Montfort when, in September 1209, at the invitation of the Bishop of Albi, he took possession of the town, and his enemies fled before him. Much water has flowed under those graceful arches since then, but the bridge is still the same, as strong as ever, and as beautiful. The Tarn here is about half the width of the Thames at London Bridge; a

Photo: Mansell, Albi

ALBI: CATHEDRAL AND RAMPARTS FROM THE OLD BRIDGE

slow, muddy stream, subject to sudden floods, which its high banks alone prevent from devastating the country round. Few strangers would guess that this dull river, a few leagues higher up, has flowed swift and clear through some of the most striking rock-scenery in France.

From that old bridge it was my privilege to watch the most gorgeous sunset I ever beheld out of the Tropics. The sky was liquid gold, and upon it floated translucent clouds of purple and crimson—vast argosies on a sea of glory. To the left the grand old bastions, their feet in the river, reared their heads proudly towards the vast shadowy bulk of the Cathedral above, while the river murmured the story of their bygone fame.

The peace of a perfect autumn evening, sunset deepening into twilight, and twilight into dusk, settled down upon the historic city. As the stars came out there floated across the water the strains of a distant band, playing in a public garden to a crowd of well-dressed *bourgeois* of the twentieth century. But the real Albi was here, here, silent and deserted upon the banks of the Tarn, so true it is that "the secret of the very life of these mediæval cities is their mediævalism." This grim and stately fortress, terrible and beautiful, is the very embodiment of the Spirit of the Past! Its builders have left no successors. Incomparable artist-craftsmen, their work was but another name for their religion, their passionate idealism, their mysticism, ever sought to express itself in terms of wood, of brick, of marble.

But they who believed in "art for life's sake" still live in such exquisite creations of flowering stone as the Cathedrals of Rheims and Bourges, of Strasbourg and Rouen; in the towering cliffs of such parables in brick and mortar as the Painted Church of St. Cecilia at Albi.

XI

NOTRE DAME DE LA DRÊCHE

When the history of the "Miraculous Madonnas" of France comes to be written, that of Our Lady of La Drêche will hold an honourable place therein. One of the least known in the present day of these old-time shrines—all now eclipsed by that of Lourdes—La Drêche has a long, interesting, and well-authenticated history. The curious name is undoubtedly a corruption of La Droite, for the church is on the right bank of the Tarn. In an ancient deed of 1185, the earliest existing which speaks of La Drêche as a separate parish church, and in all subsequent documents relating to the place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, "*Nostra Dâmo de Drécho*" (*Dretzo or Drécha*) is invariably translated "*B. Maria de dextera.*"

The history of the pilgrimage to the miraculous statue dates from very early days, for, as we have seen, at the close of the twelfth century La Drêche was a recognised parish church, and it owed its existence to the miracle which gave rise to the pilgrimage.[1] The exact date of this is not known, but we shall probably not be far wrong in assigning it to the ninth or early tenth century.

"In those days on the site of the present church there was nothing but waste-ground and rough pastures, whither the shepherd-boys led their flocks. Here one day one of them perceived in a bush an image of Our Lady, at whose feet knelt a religious. Astonished at this prodigy, and fancying their eyes had deceived them, they consulted among themselves as

[1] The following account of La Drêche is chiefly taken from a reprint of a valuable book published in 1671 by the then Rector of La Drêche. This book was a *résumé* of original documents preserved in the archives of the Cathedral at Albi, and destroyed at the Revolution.

to whether it was an illusion or a real vision; but having agreed that they had all seen the same thing for a certain space of time, they carried the news to their various hamlets, and called their friends and neighbours. These all perceived from afar the image with the religious who knelt before it, but who disappeared when they approached. Deeply awed, the people hastened to inform the *Curé* of the nearest parish of this wonderful vision. Twice the good priest, with the permission of the Bishop of Albi, removed the image to a place of honour in his church, causing it to be carried there in solemn procession, escorted by many of the clergy and the entire population of the countryside. Twice the image was again found in the bush next morning, placed there by no human hands, and the *Curé* understood that it was the will of the Blessed Virgin that a church should be erected in her honour on this very spot. The land was immediately granted by the proprietor, and the little church which housed the wonderful image was no sooner finished than it was crowded with pilgrims, who came from all parts, bringing their sick in body and soul."

From the very first, miracles began to take place. The story of La Drêche is the story of Bethlehem. It is also the story of Lourdes and La Salette written a thousand years in advance. It has been well pointed out that in the Middle Ages the manifestations of Our Lady in France were generally objective, usually by means of an image, found, as in the present case, by ignorant peasants who were often incredulous and terrified. But with the passing of the centuries, as the habits and mind of the nation changed and developed, these manifestations became in a sense subjective; the children on the mountain side at La Salette see a "beautiful lady who weeps bitterly," and speaks to them; Bernadette beholds the radiant vision upon the rock at Lourdes, invisible to the eyes of the praying crowd. But though the manner of revelation alters, those to whom it is made are still the same—unlearned men, simple, pious women, little children praying or watching their father's flocks. Who were St. Généviève and blessed

Joan of Arc, Mélanie of La Salette, and Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes but peasant children? The list might be multiplied, for the things hidden from the wise are revealed unto babes.

In 1185 there stood on the brow of a hill some six miles beyond Albi, on the opposite side of the Tarn, a magnificent church hung with *ex-votis*—so many, we are told, that room could not be found for them all on the walls. Every day fresh crowds of pilgrims came to pray before the miraculous image of Notre Dame de la Drèche. St. Bernard himself visited the church during his mission at Albi, when the inhabitants of the country were "singularly infested by heresy." In 1185 Guillaume de Pierre ascended the episcopal throne of that city. This "noble and courageous Bishop," who followed for a time the Crusade of De Montfort, was, as we have seen, the personal friend of St. Dominic. The tradition that the Saint, as the Bishop's guest, visited more than once this notable shrine is, we must again repeat, too strong to be shaken. His devotion to all pilgrimages of Our Lady is well known, for "he loved to visit places of prayer, and the relics of the saints." Whenever in his journeyings he passed a church in which the Mother of God was specially honoured, he never failed to turn aside and enter it. Nor did he pass "as a cloud without water," for he would not only pass an hour in prayer there, but often, as at Rocamadour, the whole night, and even longer.

In the Bull by which Pope Honorius III. solemnly confirmed the new Order of Friars Preachers (Dec. 22, 1216), the Pontiff formally established them in the possession of certain lands and territories, among which were Notre Dame de Lescure or Lescout,[1] and Caussanel; the first probably, the latter certainly, close to La Drêche. Caussanel still preserves the name of *Présicadous*, or Preachers. These places were thus undoubtedly known to St. Dominic, though, as a

[1] The identity of this church has been disputed (see *Cart. II.* pp. 45, 79). "Villam de Cassenobio cum omnibus pertinentibus suis; ecclesiam Sanctæ Mariæ de Lescura, &c."

matter of fact, the Friars did not in either case take possession of the church. That of Caussanel actually opened into the parish of La Drêche by a door in the south transept. Thus, as St. Dominic must assuredly have visited his own property, or rather that of the Order, it is certain that he must at the same time have come to venerate Our Lady at the already celebrated neighbouring shrine. The church of La Drêche was finished during the episcopate of Bernard de Castanet, the negotiator at Rome on the part of the Court of France for the canonisation of St. Louis, and who laid in 1282 the first stone of St. Cecilia at Albi. The arms of this great prelate were blazoned upon the roof of the new pilgrimage church, to which he had been so notable a benefactor.

During the terrible struggle with England in the fourteenth century the fortified church of La Drêche was an important stronghold. The English in 1320, already masters of Agen, had seized the castles on the right bank of the Tarn, and were unsuccessfully besieging Albi. "In the detailed history of these wars we find La Drêche, constantly taken and retaken, serving alternately as a place of defence during the battle and as a refuge after defeat. There at least English and French were united in faith at the foot of the altar, and whatever was his flag, in his last glance at the sanctuary of Our Lady the dying soldier found hope and consolation."

There is nothing which need astonish us, says a Franciscan writer, in this use of churches as fortresses. "Placed outside the city, and one of its advance posts, La Drêche . . . looked like a feudal castle, and served a double purpose. . . . Hence arose the saying: 'Our Lady of La Drêche is armed like a knight going to battle.'"

Wars, national, civil, or religious, swept the unhappy country like a flood, with but short intervals of respite, during the next two centuries. In 1575 the Huguenots were encamped round Albi, which they failed to reduce. Two bells were brought from La Drêche and hung upon the ramparts to sound the alarm—a touching proof of the devotion of the citizens to this shrine, and of their confidence in the Holy Mother of God.

But it is not chiefly as a stronghold that La Drêche figures in mediæval history. Three times in the fifteenth century a great diocesan procession of no less than 6000 persons, amongst whom were the Bishop and most of the clergy, passed from Albi across the Tarn, and up the hill to La Drêche to implore Our Lady's succour against the terrible plague then devastating the country. "In any kind of danger, whether of heresy or scandal, famine or plague, the trustful faith of the people in Our Lady of the Albigeois revived, and expressed itself by these great popular manifestations."

The Nativity of Our Lady was the great Festival of La Drêche. Thousands flocked to the shrine at the beginning of September, and it was the pious custom of the faithful to spend the night of 7th–8th in praise and thanksgiving within its walls. The great concourse of people gathered together in so restricted a space caused certain questions to be urgently debated by those responsible for the maintenance of order; and in 1468 we find the Bishop of Albi, Cardinal Jean Jeoffrédy, the personal friend of Pope Pius II. and King Louis XI., taking steps to remedy several abuses which threatened seriously to disturb the peace of the more devout pilgrims. In this act, which was in the archives of Albi in 1671, it is expressly stated that a vast number of people assembled at La Drêche at this time, and also that the abuses in question were of very long standing—facts which are an indirect proof of the popularity and antiquity of this annual pilgrimage.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the country was again devastated by plague. In December 1631 the town of Albi offered to Our Lady, whose intercession they had besought, a silver lamp of great value and weight which should burn night and day forever before the miraculous statue. After solemn High Mass in the Cathedral of St. Cecilia, the lamp was borne in procession to La Drêche. Of the five silver lamps which burnt perpetually before the miraculous image until the Reign of Terror, that of Albi was said to be the most beautiful. It bore the following pathetic inscription:

"*At the altar of the most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, conceived without original sin, the town of Albi, delivered from the desolation of the plague, hangs this lamp, in fulfilment of her vow. While providing for the maintenance of the light, she consecrates to Mary the tears she has shed over her lost children.*"

The story of the preservation of the sacred image in the days of the Terror cannot be passed over. Thrice the revolutionaries appeared within the walls of La Drêche, the first time carrying away the treasures of gold and silver, holy vessels, lamps, reliquaries and *ex-votis*. The second time they seized the hangings and sacerdotal vestments. "The altar, pictures, statues, and the miraculous image alone remained. Lastly, 'a criminal, sent by his masters, locked himself into the church to accomplish his diabolical work. He cut to pieces all the pictures, not sparing the work of Poussin himself, mutilated all figures of Saints and Angels, and overthrew the already empty Tabernacle. Only the sacred image was left! What took place in that moment in the devastated sanctuary? None can tell. Our Lady herself alone knows whether he were unable or unwilling to complete his sacrilege. Around the statue everything was in ruins. It alone remained intact, still vested in its ornaments.'"

For two years a couple of brave peasant-women hid the precious image under the head of their bed, but when the search for such relics became so strict that it was impossible to conceal it there any longer, it was buried at the foot of an ancient fig-tree which grew outside the church, from the roots of which has since sprung a later growth. It was noticed that during the cold of a terrible winter, which killed all the fig-trees of the neighbourhood, this alone survived.

The church should have been exempt from the proscription, for it was parochial. But the Government did not even respect its own laws. La Drêche was sold, and would have been degraded to secular uses had it not been bought from

its first proprietor by a priest who had taken the oath, and whose story is one of the most touching of the many attaching to the ancient shrine. M. l'Abbé Bernadou withdrew the statue from its hiding-place, replaced it in the church, restored the building, now despoiled of all its other treasures, to some semblance of beauty and order. The offices were duly celebrated, and in the *mémoire* which the unfortunate priest published in the year V of the new Calendar, he describes the state in which he found La Drêche and his attempts at restoration, together with an account of the pilgrimages which the faithful were again undertaking in honour of Our Lady. On September 7 and 8, he tells us, there was such a gathering as was calculated to console all who took part in it for the losses the church had experienced. "From the evening until noon next day the confessors had scarcely a free hour." The pamphlet closes with a passionate defence of his own position as *prêtre assermenté*. But the intense devotion to Our Lady for which he was remarkable was his salvation. He had given her back her Sanctuary, and she gave him back light and grace. Before his death, seven years later, he had seen his fatal error, abjured, submitted, and in dying left his beloved church to the Bishop of Montpellier. For over a century Masses have been said for the repose of his soul in the sanctuary which was so dear to him, and on All Souls' Day a solemn absolution is given over his nameless tomb in one of the chapels of the new church, that of the Immaculate Conception.

The miraculous statue of Notre Dame de la Drêche exists to-day on the spot sanctified by its presence for perhaps 1000 years. From time to time it has been repainted, with the intention of preserving the wood; but though the colours are fresh and bright, the statue itself is of immemorial antiquity. Our Lady is seated, and between the folds of the long veil, which escaping from her crown falls to her feet, her Divine Child is seated on her knees. Of the miracles wrought here by her intercession space fails us to speak.

Duly recorded at the time, the most ancient of these

documents were lost during the wars and by other accidents. But between 1614 and 1670 no less than 54 cures were solemnly attested and confirmed by episcopal authority. The greatest favours of Our Lady, who is honoured at La Drêche as *Salus Infirmorum* (Health of the sick), seem to have been shown to children, though men, women, and sometimes a whole parish at once were healed by her prayer. The greatest number of cures recorded are those of lame and paralytic persons. In 1850 and 1859 two fully-attested miracles were wrought in favour of children.

So great was the number of pilgrims arriving at La Drêche during the early part of the nineteenth century that the Bishop of Albi decided to build a larger church on the site of the ancient shrine. In a single month 300 priests had said Mass at the privileged altar; no less than 5000 of the faithful had there received Holy Communion. However we may regret the partial disappearance and alteration of the historic building, we cannot doubt that the change was necessary. The first stone was laid and blessed at Pentecost, 1861, in the presence of 4000 pilgrims, and by the liberality of the faithful the church was completed in September 1863. It is a fine building of deep red brick, erected over the site, and including as much as possible of the ancient church, of which the sanctuary and about half the nave form the new choir. The circular nave is surrounded by six chapels, each dedicated to Our Lady under a separate title, the sixth being that of Our Lady of Victories. Many statues and several altar-pieces are still wanting. On either side of the door watch the royal saints Louis of France and Elizabeth of Hungary, while St. Dominic and St. Francis face each other across the church. Since the Revolution La Drêche has been in the hands of Franciscan priests of the Third Order Regular. Formerly it was served by the Order of Friars Minor.

One detail may be added to this slight sketch of an interesting pilgrimage church. The great silver lamp which burns before the miraculous shrine was presented by the

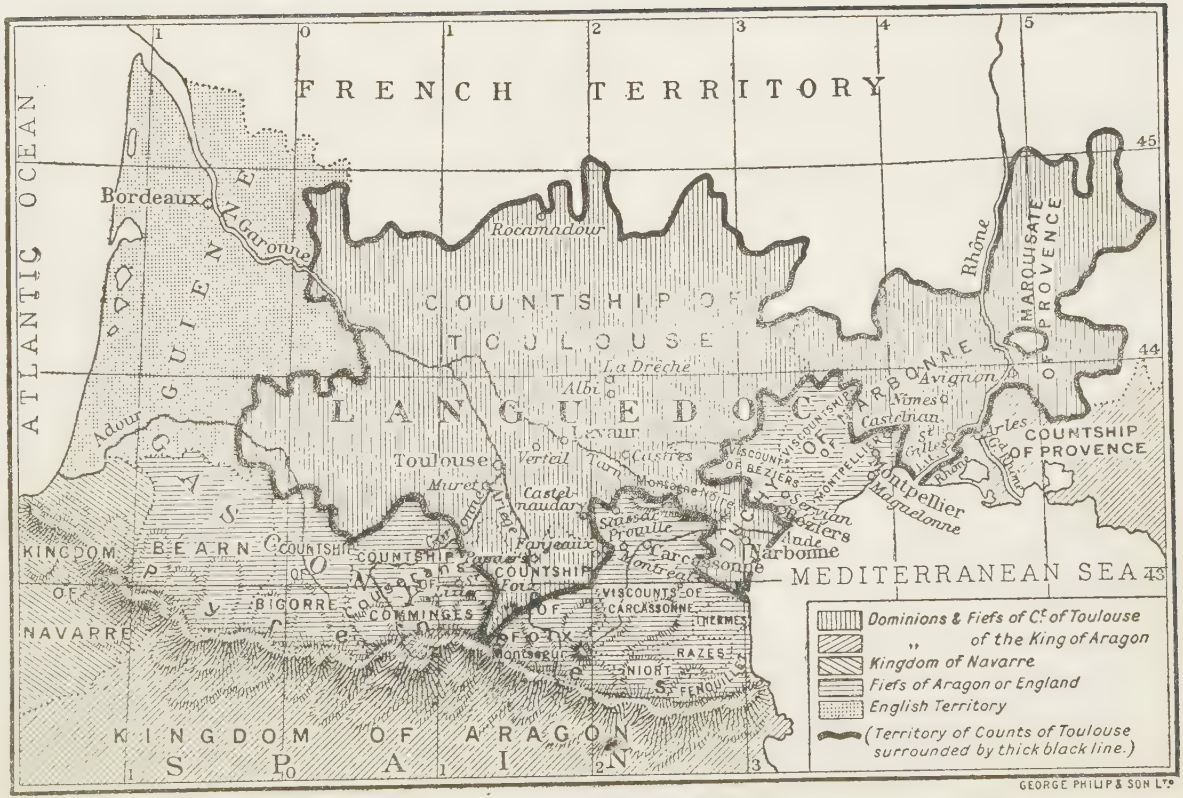
town of Albi in 1873, as a renewal of the offering of 1632, *Dominæ nostræ de Dextera.*

From the old bridge at Albi, across flat and monotonous country stretching away from the city to the range of low hills which rise above the plain, the lofty tower of La Drêche stands clear against the sky on the crest of the ridge. The view thence is said to be magnificent, but of that I cannot speak from experience, as on the morning of my own pilgrimage a close drizzling rain was falling, and everything was wrapped in mist. The only touches of colour in the bleak landscape were the brilliant orange-red gourds, which lay in rows across a few of the fields, brown and rain-soaked. Trees and earth and sky, everything was sad and sombre, neutral-tinted and monotonous. But even had it been fine, the scenery here could scarcely have inspired one, for this country, as the traveller speedily discovers, has no great horizons.

As the road, that ancient pilgrimage road trodden by thousands of feet through many centuries, wound up the side of the hill, the drizzle became a downpour and then a deluge. Somehow it suited the place. At the top, on a wide open space, bare, desolate, treeless, stood a cottage or two; and a hundred yards away the great bulk of the church loomed grandly through the driving rain. Except for a vine-clad hospice and the presbytery buildings, it stood alone on a bleak slope of slippery turf at the edge of a steep descent, now filled to the brim with rolling fog. Albi was invisible, so was the river. There was not a soul to be seen except a couple of women selling rosaries and medals outside the porch. Nothing but the great church up there, among the clouds above and around and beneath one's feet; no sound but the weeping rain. Yes! it certainly was the most suitable setting for this new picture!

"I am sorry there will not be another Mass till ten," said the kind old priest, who had taken me round the church, at the door of the sacristy; "unless indeed a strange priest

arrives, which is not very likely on a morning like this. You can scarcely wish to wait three hours,"—he broke off suddenly and pointed to the door. "St. Dominic has blessed your pilgrimage," he said, smiling. I looked round. Two young priests, their cloaks streaming with rain, had just entered the church, and were kneeling before the miraculous image of Notre Dame de la Drêche!


FRENCH TERRITORY
ATLANTIC OCEAN
GUIENNE
Bordeaux
N. Garonne
Adour
Rocamadour
COUNTSHIP OF TOULOUSE
La Drèche
Albi
LANGUEDOC
Levaur
Toulouse
Verteil
Castres
Muret
Castelnaudary
Montagne Noire
Saissac
Prouille
Fanjeaux
Carcassonne
Montreal
Narbonne
Aude
Beziers
Servian
Montpellier
Magnelonne
Nîmes
Avignon
Castelnau
St Gilles
Arles
Rhône
Gd Rhône
MARQUISATE OF PROVENCE
COUNTSHIP OF PROVENCE
VISCOUNTSHIP OF NARBONNE
VISCOUNTS OF BEZIERS
VISCOUNTS OF MONTPELLIER
DUCHY OF NARBONNE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
KINGDOM OF NAVARRE
BEARN
COUNTSHIP OF BIGORRE
COUNTSHIP OF COMMINGES
COUNTSHIP OF FOIX
VISCOUNTS OF CARCASSONNE
THERMES
RAZES
NIORT
FENOUILLE
Montsegur
KINGDOM OF ARAGON
SPAIN
Dominions & Fiefs of Ct of Toulouse
" of the King of Aragon
Kingdom of Navarre
Fiefs of Aragon or England
English Territory
(Territory of Counts of Toulouse surrounded by thick black line.)
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XII

THE TRAGEDY OF BÉZIERS

When Julius Cæsar, in 120 A.D., colonised Béziers with the Seventh Legion,[1] the town, founded by the Iberians, was already old. Its church dates back to the earliest ages of Christianity, but is mentioned for the first time in 353. Its first bishop, St. Aphrodisius, was martyred in the persecution of the Emperor Decius.

It is a curious fact that, in spite of its unusually advantageous position, and fortified, seemingly impregnable precipice overhanging the Orb, Béziers seems never to have been, for any length of time, autonomous. In the fourth, and for many succeeding centuries, the place belonged to Narbonne. Later, the title of Count of Béziers was merged in that of Carcassonne, and the Trencavel family ruled over both cities. One of the sons of Roger *le Vieux* of Carcassonne (*d.* 1012) acquired the Countships of Béziers and Agde by marriage, and inherited the greater part of his father's possessions, the Carcassés, Couserans, the upper valley of the Ariège, part of Comminges, a number of castles in the Toulousain and Narbonnais (covering a large part of the modern departments of Hérault and Ariège), and certain important districts in Aude and Haute Garonne. The Count of Carcassonne and Béziers was then, from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, the most formidable rival of the lord-paramount of the Midi, the Count of Toulouse, and it was only by the extremes of brute force or skilful diplomacy that the balance of power was adjusted and perpetual internecine war avoided. Raymond Trencavel I.

[1] Hence the name "Septimania" given to this district.

(1150–67) was an open and declared enemy of Raymond V. of Toulouse (1148–94), an astute politician, who had married the Princess Constance, daughter of Louis VII. of France. But after the assassination of Trencavel in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Béziers, his son, Roger II. (1167–94), not only became the friend and ally of his father's enemy, but married Adelaide, daughter of Raymond V., and held his own as cleverly as his father-in-law between the dominating and often-conflicting powers of Toulouse and the ambitious House of Aragon.

It was Raymond Roger Trencavel, son of Roger II. and Adelaide, who was Count of Carcassonne and Béziers in the days of the Albigensian Crusade, when Simon de Montfort avenged the cause of God in the cities of the Midi, and the tragedy of Béziers opened the campaign.

Béziers has a terrible and chequered history. Sacked by the Vandals in the fifth century, and later by the Visigoths; sacked again by Visigoths in the sixth and seventh centuries; almost destroyed in the Saracen invasion of 733, it was retaken by Charles Martel twenty years later, and towards the close of the eighth century Pepin-le-Bref established a countship here which is mentioned under Charlemagne in 808. When Roger II., after his father's assassination, succeeded at length, by an alliance with Aragon, in taking Béziers by storm, he commanded a general massacre of the people, though he had sworn not to avenge the murder.

The story of Béziers is written in blood! No less than eight times have its inhabitants been massacred; as Christians by the heathen, Arian, and Mussulman hosts; as political enemies by a powerful conqueror; as faithless subjects, by treachery; saddest of all, as obstinate and unrepentant heretics, by the representatives of the Church, which only drew her sword when all means of conciliation and persuasion had failed.

It was at Béziers that the second of the great Conferences of 1205 took place, immediately after that of Servian. At that time there were very few Catholics in the city, and the heretics formed by far the larger part of the population,

"both in the city and the borough."[1] "The Viscount, the consuls, even the Bishop, Ermengaud,[2] had dealings with the sect. The public discussions and sermons continued for a fortnight. The Catholics were strengthened and confirmed in their faith; the heretics were confounded and humiliated, but not converted." The inhabitants of Béziers possessed in a fatal degree the peculiar quality of obstinacy, mingled with ignorance and barbarity, so characteristic of the mediæval south. It was here that Blessed Peter of Castelnau, whose burning words, as well as the remembrance of his past deeds, had excited the strongest feeling of hatred against him, left the missionaries, by the urgent advice of the Bishop of Osma and the Abbot of Cîteaux, to return to Provence, and there for a time continue single-handed the work of evangelisation. He remained in the neighbourhood of Montpellier for nearly a year, until the Conference of Montréal (June–July 1206), after which he again returned, this time to Nîmes, whither his colleague, the third legate, Brother Raoul, was journeying to meet him, when in November 1207 death overtook him at the Abbey of Franquevaux, about nine months after the Bishop of Osma had passed away in Spain. Two of the labourers in this terrible harvest-field had already been called to their reward; a third was to win the glorious crown of martyrdom.

Peter of Castelnau, who had gone to Provence to unite the nobles, with the design of extirpating the heresy in the Narbonnais, fell by the poignard of a traitor in the pay of Raymond VI. of Toulouse, at St. Gilles, on the banks of the Rhone, on January 15, 1208. This nobleman, who may be said to play in the drama of the Crusade the part of principal villain, was the weak and unworthy son of Raymond V., a brave soldier and able politician, whose great mistake had

[1] *Cité*—the most strongly fortified part of the town, including Castle, Cathedral, and all defensive works. In time of siege the inhabitants took shelter here. Outside its walls was the *Bourg*, also fortified, but less strongly. Here dwelt the ordinary citizens whose business was trade, not defence (hence, *bourgeois*). Even the smallest mediæval town was so divided. Many consisted of three parts, *La Cité*, *la Ville* (less important than the City, and the residence of the higher class of inhabitants), and *le Bourg*.

[2] Bérenger, Archbishop of Narbonne, favoured the heresy, as did several other prelates.

lain in the temporising attitude he adopted latterly towards the heretics. His son, destined to play so unenviable a part in the history of the Midi, and indirectly in that of St. Dominic, was cunning, vicious, and utterly unreliable, though by no means wanting in courage of a baser sort. Openly a protector of the Catharist sect, the fact that he was clever and cowardly enough so to cover his traces that the murder of the Legate could never directly be traced to him, and that he continued throughout his lifetime openly to deny and disavow it, cannot prevail against the truth declared by Pope Innocent III. in the Bull, which on March 10, 1208, proclaimed the Crusade against the Albigenses. Raymond VI. was as truly the murderer of Peter of Castelnau as Henry II. of England was the murderer of St. Thomas à Becket.

"We have heard a thing," says the Pope, "which we are forced to believe, and for which the whole Church mourns; namely, that as Brother Peter of Castelnau of holy memory, monk and priest, virtuous among all men, illustrious by his life, science and renown, departed with many others to evangelise in peace and to strengthen the faith in the [western] province, was working faithfully at the mission committed to him. . . . against the aforesaid Brother was raised up by the devil his minister Count Raymond of Toulouse. This man, for many and great excesses committed against the Church and against God, having often incurred ecclesiastical censures, and often (being as a man of changing colour, sly, impossible to hold, and inconstant) having obtained absolution by a simulated repentance, could not in the end conceal the rage which he had conceived against the said holy monk (whose mouth spoke words of truth to reprimand and chastise the nations, and especially him Count Raymond, who deserved extreme reproof on account of his great crimes), but convoked the Legates of the Apostolic See, to wit, Blessed Peter and his colleague in the town of St. Gilles,[1] promising to give satisfaction on all the counts for which he was indicted."

[1] St. Gilles, the ancient Heraclea, later called *Vallis Flaviana*, is a small town between Arles and Nimes, about fifteen miles from the former city. It was the site of a magnificent Cistercian Abbey, of whose church—destroyed

The Bull goes on to describe how Raymond failed to keep his promises, having obtained his end, and how he refused point-blank to submit himself to penitence, so that, seeing all was fruitless, the Legate determined to retire. "But Raymond publicly threatened [him] with death, declaring that in whatever place he might refuge, whether by land or water, he would observe his departure carefully; and immediately, suiting actions to his words, he sent his accomplices to prepare the ambush which he meditated."

The instances of the Abbot of St. Gilles, and the consuls and *bourgeois* of the town having failed to appease the Count's "delirium of rage," the citizens, armed, conducted the preachers to the banks of the Little Rhone, "where, overtaken by darkness, they spent the night, while certain men whose presence was unsuspected by them watched them unseen." The Bull[1] goes on to recount that the next day the martyr, having said Mass, was preparing to embark and cross the river with his companions, when one of the "satellites of Satan," brandishing his lance, wounded him mortally in the side, "all unsuspicious of so great a treason." Sinking to the ground, the Legate, "after the example of his Master Jesus and Blessed Stephen," again and again repeated to his murderer, "May God forgive you as I forgive!" And shortly afterwards, having unselfishly employed his last hour in taking counsel with his brother missionaries "as to how best they might spread abroad peace and faith," the martyr, "after the final prayers," entered the presence of the Lord he had so gloriously served.[1]

The Holy Father goes on to say that, as the grain of wheat

by the Huguenots before it was completed, only the marvellous Roman façade remains. It is in the same style as that of the grand old Romanesque Cathedral of St. Trophimus at Arles, but even more beautiful and ornate. St. Gilles is on the right bank of that branch of the river called the Little Rhone, which separates from the main-stream at Arles. The Rhone, like the Rhine, is a silver string on which are threaded innumerable ancient "colonies," of which many to-day—*e.g.* Arles—are more Roman than Rome itself.

[1] Pope Innocent says very beautifully that, having thus shed his blood, it is his (Innocent's) opinion that notable miracles would have been wrought through the intercession of the martyr had not the hardness and incredulity of the heretics prevented this; "after the manner of those of whom it is

falling into the ground dies to bring forth a hundred-fold, so the blood of the Martyr, being the seed of the Church, shall abundantly bring forth fruit in the "evil and perverse" country of Provence. He bids the archbishops and bishops of the whole region to denounce throughout their dioceses the murderer and his accomplices, together with "those by whose counsel and favour he has wrought so great a crime." He announces their excommunication, until by entire repentance and full satisfaction those concerned merit absolution and solemn revocation of their sentence; and calls on all who are men, girded and armed for the conflict, to fight the heresy with the sole arm which it would recognise—that of force. "We enjoin upon you, in so great and urgent a necessity, with confidence in the name of Christ granting you remission of all sins, that you delay not to attack so terrible an evil, and that you do your best to bring peace to these heretics in Him Who is a God of peace and love; and finally that you study to exterminate in those regions heresy and impiety by all the means which God may reveal to you, fighting against the sectaries with a strong hand and stretched-out arm as against men more dangerous than the Saracens."

Once more reminding the faithful that Raymond VI. had been again and again excommunicated on account of his numerous and enormous crimes, the list of which would be too long to quote; seeing, too, that it is clearly evident that he is actually, if not personally, guilty of the murder of this holy man, not only by threatening and laying an ambush for him, "but by rewarding the murderer, and admitting him to his close friendship," the Pontiff declares that, as a first proof of the Count's repentance, he must promise to drive from his country all heretics and sectaries.

The Bull, every line of which is instinct with the virile and

said in the Gospel that Jesus Christ wrought not many miracles among them because of their unbelief. Therefore also our Lord . . . being before Herod . . . who rejoiced greatly to see him, in the hope that he would do some miracle, refused to work one, or to answer the questions put to Him, knowing that the unbelief which asks for miracles is not inclined to Faith, and that Herod only sought an idle gratification."

enthusiastic personality of the writer, closes with a magnificent outburst :—

"Up then, soldiers of Christ! Up then, fearless novices of the Christian army! May the anguish of the whole Church touch your hearts, and holy zeal influence you with desire to avenge so great an insult offered to our God! Remember that though our Creator, who gave us life, does not need our services, nevertheless He deigns to make use of them, allowing His omnipotence to appear as it were restrained when our help fails Him; and that He has given us in the present circumstances the opportunity of gloriously serving and pleasing Him."

The Crusade was thus proclaimed finally. Putting the religious question aside for a moment, it is difficult to see how Innocent III. could have acted otherwise. The Legate, his Ambassador, had been foully slain, and the law of nations in our own day, as in his, universally admits that a declaration of war against the offending power is inevitable upon the murder of an accredited ambassador. The dignity of the Pontificate had to be maintained; the innocent blood avenged. But it was no sudden decision of the Holy Father; no mere burst of righteous indignation against those who scrupled not to use treachery as well as force in their endeavours to overthrow the Church in Languedoc and Provence. No less than four times already had Innocent III. written to Philip Augustus, King of France,[1] begging him each time with greater earnestness to come to the rescue of the imperilled Faith of the Midi. Its rulers, said the Pope, would do nothing, but Philip, their sovereign lord, had the right to use force to compel them to their duties, and if they still refused assistance, to seize on their fiefs and cities.

Again and again throughout the Crusade this appeal was renewed. Though Philip's interference would probably have turned the scale, he steadily refused it. Far too busy in the matter of King John of England to do more than return a courteous but categoric refusal to the Pope (when he did not ignore his letters), the king maintained throughout a non-

[1] In May, 1204; January and February 1205; November 1207.

committal attitude. In November 1207, the Holy Father made a special appeal through the king to the principal nobles of France, the Duke of Burgundy, the Counts of Nevers, Champagne, Blois, and others, which met with a better result, though only a comparatively small number agreed to take part, for the honour of their Faith and of the Holy See, in a Crusade which offered so little temporal advantage, even though the same indulgences were attached to it as to that to the Holy Land, and though the Pope promised his personal protection during their absence to their families and property. Finally, Philip Augustus promised—in effect—to take part in the Crusade if the Holy See would undertake to establish a two years' truce with England—and to guarantee his expenses!

Matters were at this very stage when the murder of Peter of Castelnau took place, and Arnauld Almeric, the Chief Legate, was charged to proclaim the Crusade. A fifth time the Pope appealed for generous help to the king, and again Philip replied by specious excuses. He had, he said, every reason to detest Count Raymond, who had openly taken the part of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and even married his sister, although Philip had spent much money in defending Toulouse against the English; in return for which generosity he had found many Toulousains in King John's English garrison at Falaise. But he could not undertake the Crusade unless the Pope would on his part fulfil the conditions which he—the king—had already laid down. He did not, in short, intend to risk his kingdom to fight for his Faith, and from this position no representations could move him.

Meanwhile the appeal of the Pope upon the death of the Legate had met with an almost unanimous and passionate response throughout the whole of France, and even in Germany and Italy. If many of the rulers refused to take up arms for the cause of Christ, the people at least, and scores of the lesser nobility, eagerly acclaimed it, and mobilised in masses, desirous above all of gaining the Pardon attached to the Crusade, with a simple and childlike faith. A leader only was wanting. Innocent III. made a final appeal to Philip.

If he could not come himself, would he not send his son?[1] To which the king made the historic reply: "Two great lions have fastened upon me, Otho, the so-called Emperor, and John of England. Both strive with all their power to trouble my kingdom. I cannot go, and I cannot send my son. Is it not enough that I permit my nobles to go and fight for the Faith in the Narbonnais?"

The leader's mantle, refused by the Royal House of France, was shortly to fall upon the shoulders of him whose name has since become a household word in the country where Philip Augustus is long forgotten. This was the grand and chivalrous Crusader who had so often fought beneath the walls of Jerusalem itself, who had not feared in 1203 to refuse to accompany the army of the fifth Crusade, which went from Venice at Dandolo's instigation to sack Constantinople[2] in direct disobedience of the commands of the Pope; the hero in whose veins ran the blood of two noble houses of England and France, that "mountain of strength," Simon de Montfort. His nomination, however, did not take place until after the siege of Béziers, and he has not the slightest official connection with what took place within that unhappy city.

The history of the war against the Albigenses, its causes and consequences, belong in detail rather to the story of De Montfort than to that of St. Dominic, who had very much less direct connection with it than is commonly supposed. But though it is necessary to indicate the main outlines of the historic events with which our Saint was in a measure concerned, this and the following chapters are in no sense a consecutive history of the Crusade.

In June 1209, Raymond VI. the coward, terrified at last into submission, had done penance publicly before the shrine of his victim at St. Gilles, exactly as Henry II. had done at

[1] The future Louis VIII., father of St. Louis (IX.).

[2] Henry Dandolo, the old blind Doge of Venice, suggested this expedition for political reasons when the Crusaders passed through the city; Constantinople being a dangerous rival of the City in the Sea. In spite of Pope Innocent's indignant prohibition, the Crusaders did sail to Constantinople, and sacked it as cruelly as did the Mussulmans 250 years later, Dandolo himself accompanying the expedition.

Canterbury. In July, the great nobles having united their forces at Montpellier, Count Raymond hastened to lay at the feet of Arnauld Almeric the letters of reconciliation which he had received from the Legate specially sent from Rome to absolve him. He said further that he desired to prove his loyalty and sincerity by actually joining the Crusaders. The Chief Legate, who was aware that Raymond had previously paid a hurried visit to his cousin Philip Augustus to implore his help and advice—the former of which was withheld, and the latter vague and non-committal—clearly distrusted this new-found zeal, but the Count's request could not well be refused, and Raymond of Toulouse enrolled himself among the Catholic nobles who had taken the cross, on condition that he should guide the army to Béziers, the first important town on the line of march towards Raymond's own capital. That the Count of Carcassonne and Béziers, a young man lately married, was Raymond's own nephew made no difference to that worthy. Moreover, Trencavel, knowing the danger, had fled, though no coward, to his other, and even stronger feudal city of Carcassonne. Béziers for the moment was without a leader, and by no means well garrisoned.

But the Bishop of the doomed city, Reynaud de Montpeyroux,[1] who had only been appointed to his present charge a few months, was with the army at Montpellier, and "like a good man attached to the interests of his flock he came straight to the Legate, beseeching him that he would have pity upon the poor people who were in Béziers, seeing that . . . their lord had abandoned them; and that he would give him leave and licence to go himself to Béziers in order to show his people the great danger which they incurred; to which the Legate consented, for love of the Bishop, who was a learned man and a great cleric; and gave him leave to go and do as he would." Having arrived at the town with a small escort, "the Bishop caused all the people to come together in the Cathedral of St. Nazaire," which the

[1] Bishop of Béziers 1209–11.

Canons had recently been obliged to fortify to protect themselves against the sectaries. "There, warning them of their danger, and of the risk they ran in holding out, he besought them to render the town to the Legate, promising the security of all their goods, and that they should not lose the value of a penny. He prayed them most lovingly to do this," but the people with one voice refused, replying that rather than yield to the Legate and his army they would eat their own children, for they had a great and strong town, and many to defend it; moreover, that their lord would send them help from Carcassonne if they needed it, and that they refused to hear any more, or speak on the subject again.

The good Bishop's anxiety is fully explained when we learn that during the council of war held at Montpellier the great barons of the North had decided, as a strong political move to strike terror into the hearts of their foes at the outset, to massacre the entire population as soon as the city was in their hands.[1] This the Legate was powerless to prevent, and both he and the other ecclesiastics knew it. It is a most important point, and one which has been slurred over by Catholic historians; while non-Catholic writers have delighted in throwing the entire responsibility of the tragedy of Béziers on the shoulders of the clergy, as represented by Arnauld Almeric, who of course represented the Pope. As a matter of fact, the Abbot of Citeaux hated carnage as much as did Innocent III. himself, as he proved at the siege of Carcassonne. "It was thus a political and military motive which inspired this act;[2] it was the result of a plan reflected upon in cold blood, and not the explosion of Catholic fanaticism. It must be laid to the charge of the cruelty of the military chiefs, and the necessities of war, and not to religious sentiment. The massacre of Béziers was an act of war like the burning of the Palatinate ordered by Louis XIV."[3]

[1] See Guiraud, "*Histoire Partiale, Histoire Vraie*," pp. 288–290, where this most interesting question is fully discussed.

[2] The Massacre of Béziers.

[3] Guiraud, *op. cit.*

Very sadly the Bishop left his people and returned to the army, which in the meantime had been strongly reinforced. "It was the greatest and most incredible thing ever beheld, to see how from all parts of the world men came to gain the Pardon."

Raymond VI. having conducted the Crusaders to Béziers along the very road trodden by St. Dominic, Don Diego, and the Legates four years earlier, on their way to Servian, the city was surrounded and blockaded; "there being around the walls so many tents and pavilions that it seemed as if the whole world had met there." Too late the men of Béziers repented at the sight of the invaders. But their chief trouble lay in the fact that they were leaderless; they had driven away their Bishop, and been deserted by their Viscount. All the citizens armed themselves as well as they could, and made a desperate *sortie* across the bridge which at the foot of the castle-rock spans with its many arches the wide and shallow waters of the Orb. They were repulsed and driven back again across the bridge, where, falling upon a straggler from the invading army they slew him, and threw his body into the river. It was the signal of assault. Slowly the army began to move, "so that the very earth trembled"; and marched straight upon the town. In vain did the inhabitants lock and bar their gates and doors, and mount upon the walls to defend their lost city. The day of grace was past. The assailants scaled the walls, broke down the defences, poured into the narrow streets where terrified children and shrieking women fled before them, and the desperate men who endeavoured still to make a stand at the street-corners were swept away like straws before the resistless flood. The whole population was put to the sword. Not one was spared. "Seeing that, those who could took refuge in the great church of St. Mary Magdalene, both men and women; the priests of the church were bidden to toll the bell when all should be dead. But there was neither sound nor bell, for neither vested priest nor cleric remained alive—all had passed by the edge of the sword, not one was left."

So writes an ancient anonymous chronicler; such is the generally accepted account of the tragedy of Béziers. But the idea is false, and the chronicler has—as was not infrequent—grossly exaggerated. The numbers slain at Béziers have been given as varying from 10,000 to 15,000. This latter figure is that quoted by the Chief Legate himself to Pope Innocent III. As a matter of fact, the total was probably much lower. "The principal massacre took place in a church . . . which could only contain 2000 persons, and unless we suppose that the conquerors slew themselves we can scarcely admit that everyone in the building was put to death," says M. Guiraud in his admirable essay upon the subject.[1] Moreover, as he further points out, so far from the entire population being destroyed, as soon as the Crusaders had departed Béziers speedily reorganised itself, and prepared anew to resist them. This is incompatible with a universal massacre.

But even though 15,000 be a slight exaggeration, the tragedy of Béziers remains the darkest of the Crusade. If only 10,000 or 12,000 were slain, the carnage must have been appalling. An old writer remarks that its date—22nd June—was a coincidence which marked the just judgment of God: "for forty years earlier, on the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, and in her church, the citizens of Béziers had traitorously and cruelly slain their lord viscount Trencavel, and broken the teeth of the Bishop of the city who strove to save him from their hands."

Béziers had long been a town of evil repute. More horrible sacrileges, more diabolical outrages against the Blessed Sacrament had taken place there than in any other city of the Midi. The people were hardened in their heresy, fierce, cruel, and unspeakably blasphemous. To many in that last awful hour must have come home those heart-rending words, informed with the whole philosophy of suffering: "We

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 288. The absurd story of the Legate's having cried out: "Kill, kill, the Lord will know His own," is entirely disposed of by M. Guiraud in this invaluable essay. "It is apocryphal, and no historian who wishes to be taken seriously now dares to quote it," he says, and proves his statement.

indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." And few innocent suffered with the guilty. "The town of Béziers," says Vaux-Cernay, "counted many nobles among its inhabitants, but all were infected with the poison of heresy, and its citizens were not only sectaries but much more . . . men of evil life, the worst of thieves, full of every kind of sin."

It is perhaps well, at the beginning of these chapters which deal specially with the Crusade, to glance at the political state of France, that it may be possible to understand the curious state of disunion in a kingdom which was then scarcely a kingdom, and its disastrous results, particularly in the south. Remembering that about half the country at that time belonged to England, and confining ourselves to that region of France which was nominally ruled by its own king, we may divide this roughly into two parts. The northern portion was more or less completely under the sway of the King of France, and its nobles were his obedient and loyal vassals. But when we turn to the south (the Pyrenean territory and the great provinces of Languedoc and Provence), we find an extraordinary difference. The same thing was happening here as in Italy, where not only in the territory of the Holy Roman Empire, but to a lesser degree in the Papal states themselves, each city was striving for independence, and was in many cases, as at Pisa and Florence, only nominally subject to the temporal sovereign. In Languedoc the royal power was greatly diminished. After 200 years of complicated history, at the opening of the thirteenth century, the great dignities of the Midi had become hereditary, and Counts and Dukes very often usurped royal privileges. Particularly was this the case with the most powerful house of all, that of Toulouse. Its Count had, with certain restrictions, sovereign authority in his own city, in Cahors, Agen, Nîmes, and Agde; he possessed half Provence, by an arrangement with its even greater suzerain, the King of Aragon, and was influential in four other important countships. The Midi "lived almost

in ignorance of the names of the French kings." For the simple peasantry the prince to be feared and served was not the unknown, shadowy monarch in distant Paris, but the powerful master, too often the cruel lord, whose immediate subjects they were, who could sally forth from his city or strong castle with his men-at-arms, and not only compel the service of his vassals when it suited him, but punish disobedience with death; who could carry war into the heart of a rival town and destroy it before their eyes; who was always on the spot, always ready to strike, or avenge.

For the Feudal System was in full force then, though not developed as in Normandy, and the local nobility were, to all intents and purposes, sovereigns in their own dominions. Even castles and strongholds like that of Saissac had become only second in importance to the great towns, because they were practically impregnable, and capable of harbouring a strong force of men-at-arms.

The cities were almost like republics. Toulouse (though owning the supreme authority of her count), Montpellier, Nîmes, Béziers, and Narbonne, were self-governing. They owed their liege a certain carefully-exacted obedience, but treated with him as one power to another, and did not hesitate to declare war upon him when he chose to violate their privileges. Montpellier bought the right of her freedom in hard cash; later on Toulouse and Nîmes acquired it by cleverly-organised insurrections. We see the individual power of the Counts gradually failing before the corporate power of the great cities. The consuls of Toulouse had their banners, their army, and themselves made war upon the less important barons in the neighbourhood, or else allied themselves with their sovereign.

Even in the small towns the spirit of independence, which would not be denied or coerced, was growing rapidly; that modern spirit which yet possessed all the passionate enthusiasm of mediævalism; which took up a cause so eagerly, and so soon tired of it; which ignored alike its own strength and its own weakness; the *feu de paille* of a people proud, excitable,

unstable, curious, and possessed of very little heart. Each individual, as each town, was for himself. Even the serfs who escaped formed new settlements, *Villes-neuves*, where on condition of abandoning to their lord the land they had held from him they were sure of finding independence.[1]

At the same time, in the Béarnais and the territory of Comminges and Foix, all bordering on the Pyrenees, Catalonian influence had steadily been growing. Peter of Aragon, who began so bravely and ended so terribly on the field of Muret, who had acquired Montpellier by marriage, had bought or inherited the suzerainty of many of the principal towns of the south. So much was this the case that this part of France seemed scarcely French at all. The only mark of royal seigneury in the charters of the time is the signature—often merely the name—of the King of France.

This extraordinary relaxation of the bond between king and nobles also affected the lesser nobility, who in their turn desired independence. This accounts for the fact that when the Crusade opened in 1209, city after city, fortress after fortress, fell an easy prey to the invaders, because the lord of each was an independent unit among his fellows, with whom very often he had a personal feud, and who had no intention of combining with a powerful enemy to help him to defend his own, even against a common foe. Thus Raymond VI. led the Crusaders to Béziers, a city whose ruler (under the suzerainty of the King of Aragon) was his own sister's son.

Of all the figures that loom grand, terrible, or despicable through the shadows of the history of that saddest and most glorious war, that of Raymond, after De Montfort and Peter of Aragon, is the most conspicuous. Faithless to his people, his friends, his foes, his family, his five wives; faithless to his religion, and the God whom he sometimes feigned to serve; as cruel as the dreaded Count of Foix, more wily than the King of Aragon himself, Raymond of Toulouse stands out as a revelation of cowardice and cunning. He did not deceive St. Dominic, nor could he hoodwink Arnauld Almeric and

[1] See article "Languedoc" (Molinier), in *La Grande Encyclopædie*.

Simon de Montfort, but he very nearly succeeded in deceiving the Holy Father, and was probably quite successful in deceiving himself! The blow struck indirectly by his hand that winter morning on the banks of the Rhone shed the blood of thousands who leant on the broken reed of his protection. In the end it cost him his own dominions, for in 1229, his son, despairing any longer of holding his own, ceded all that he had to the Crown of France, and became its vassal.

To-day, in spite of its great natural beauty, and perhaps all the more because of the prosperity of the modern town, Béziers impresses the stranger with an indefinable feeling of melancholy. Tragedy has reigned within those crumbling ramparts; has swept through those narrow, twisting streets in a tide of blood. The old Cathedral of St. Nazaire, it is true, was in great part rebuilt in the fourteenth century, but memories still haunt its lofty, grey walls. From the western façade one looks over the parapet to the plain where the great host of the Crusaders encamped, watches them crossing the old bridge below, and swarming up the precipitous rock as the doomed people fly before them to take unavailing sanctuary. . . .

Far away across a sea of vineyards rises the tower-crowned rock of Servian; to right and left the peaceful country slumbers in the summer sunshine; the river ripples beneath the fatal bridge. Just so it looked 700 years ago, when St. Dominic and the Cistercian Legates came barefoot and unarmed to preach the Spiritual Crusade. Just so four years later, when the resistless host poured across the plain to avenge the murder of one of these very men against whom Béziers had shut her ears.

"If thou hadst known, even in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace," must have been the cry of St. Dominic's heart when he heard the fatal news. For of all the terrors of that awful, but inevitable Crusade, the most fearful of all was the Tragedy of Béziers.

XIII

THE HIGH CITY OF CARCASSONNE

Carcassonne, the dream-city set on a hill within its double diadem of immemorial walls and battlemented towers, is a unique fragment of mediævalism too little known in the twentieth century. With the exception of Toulouse, it is more closely connected with the history of St. Dominic than any other considerable town in Languedoc. It is, moreover, one of the most ancient cities in France. It is believed to have existed in the Stone Age, when the surrounding country was inhabited by the men whose traces can still be found in the curious dolmens and menhirs of the neighbourhood. Under the Iberians it was certainly a settlement, and under their Roman successors a fortified town, though its name is not mentioned before the second half of the first century. It is referred to by the elder Pliny, and in certain of the MSS. of Cæsar's *De Bello Gallico*.[1] From the first century Carcassonne was an independent municipality of the colony, and up to the sixth century one of the principal stations on the Great Roman Road which led through Toulouse from Narbonne to distant Bordeaux. From the fourth century, however, it belonged to Narbonne, until in the fifth century the Visigoths fell upon the South, and conquered Carcassonne in 462. It was attacked by Clovis in 507, when he destroyed the Visigothic kingdom of Toulouse, and tradition tells us that he found the castle full of the treasures of the Temple at Jerusalem stolen from Rome by Alaric I. and brought to France by Alaric II.; but no reliance can be placed on this

[1] Bk. iii. c. 20. The MSS. in which Carcassonne is mentioned are not, however, considered authentic by some authorities.

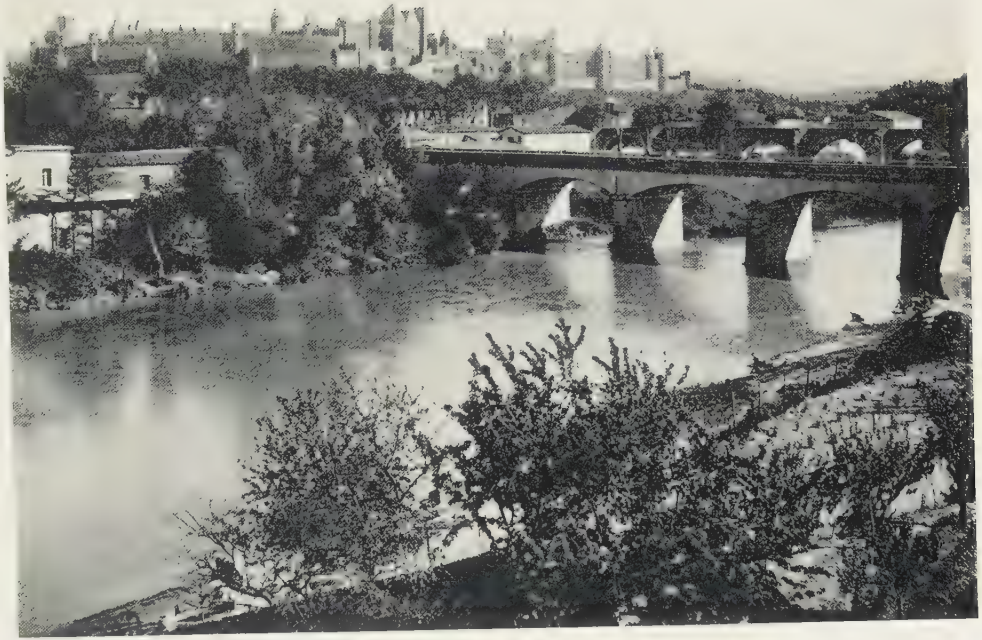


Photo: M. Michel Jordy, Carcassonne

THE HIGH CITY OF CARCASSONNE

legend. The city, however, was recaptured, and remained in the possession of the Visigoths, many traces of whose beautiful brickwork can still be seen in the inner ring of fortifications, till the beginning of the eighth century, when the Saracens from Spain swept over the country. But though they were successful in driving out the Visigoths and gaining Carcassonne in 725, they were unable to possess themselves of the whole province of the *Septimania*, as they desired. Their dominion was but short, and it was probably in 759 that the city submitted to the Franks, when it was attached by Pepin-le-Bref to the kingdom of Aquitaine. In the ninth century, having rebelled, it was unsuccessfully besieged by Charlemagne, and from this epoch dates the ancient line of Counts of Carcassonne, which was replaced in the twelfth century by that of Trencavel of Béziers.

The third of the great Conferences held by the Legates and St. Dominic, with which the Saint's mission opened, was held here for eight days, directly after that of Béziers in June 1205, with unfortunately very little result. For the cities were sisters, and Raymond Roger of Trencavel, their lord, was a strong partisan of the heretics. It was at Carcassonne, a year later, that the Chief Legate, rejoined by Blessed Peter of Castelnau and reinforced by twelve Cistercian Abbots and a number of monks, met St. Dominic, the Bishop of Osma, and Brother Raoul before setting out on the Feast of St. John the Baptist for the historic Conference at Montréal. It was at Carcassonne that the second siege of the Crusade took place—a siege which mercifully this time did not end in massacre, thanks, we are expressly told, to the authority of the Abbot of Citeaux. It is here that one of the most important *dramatis personæ* of the Crusade enters the scene, Peter II. of Aragon, that complex, enigmatical character whom even yet we are far from understanding. A Catholic prince, crowned in 1204 by Pope Innocent III. himself; a noted champion of orthodoxy in the Midi, where he had such great possessions; himself holding Conferences—he had presided at one such held in Carcassonne in 1208—yet respected

by both parties for his impartiality, this man, who was more powerful than Raymond of Toulouse himself, secretly ambitious, openly conciliatory, whose private life was notoriously evil and whose public career was brilliant and distinguished; who sought to pose as mediator in the struggle in which he at first entirely refused to join, met his death a few years later in command of a rebel and heretic army, on the Field of Muret. For Peter of Aragon had stumbled at that usual stumbling-stone of mediæval rulers—personal ambition.

It is extraordinarily interesting to study the characters of those who opposed the Crusade, and to notice the varying motives by which they were actuated — ambition, private hatred, animal ferocity, political jealousy, selfishness, or merely rebellious resistance, from the lowest of motives, to the authority of the Church. It is not too much to say outright that in no case did one of the four most important nobles concerned, whatever may be thought of those who followed them, fight for the sake of the heresy itself, for the creed which they were supposed to hold. In this the Albigensian leaders differed from the Protestants and Calvinists of a few centuries later, though all were united in a common hatred of Rome.

Raymond Roger of Foix was to all intents and purposes a heretic; his namesake, Trencavel of Carcassonne, a man of a very different and far nobler type, was more than favourable to Catharism, but to a student of the times it is perfectly clear that this laxness was due, not to a strong personal conviction of the righteousness of their cause, but rather to the general spirit of indifference which, as we have already tried to indicate, brooded over the Midi. It need hardly be told how such a cult attracted a man like Raymond of Toulouse, who found in the practice of the Albigenses both a defence for the licence of his own life, and countless opportunities for affronting and insulting the Church, not only through her priests and prelates, but even in the person of Pope Innocent himself. At the same time, though nearly a dozen times excommunicated, he always declared, even

while leading in person his army against Simon de Montfort, that he was no heretic, but had been forced into political opposition by the action of the Crusaders.

Peter of Aragon, the greatest of the four, fell when his hour struck in open rebellion against the Holy Father, whose affectionate warnings he had scorned, in the endeavour to secure for himself, through the defeat of De Montfort, the territories of the very men who were his allies. And his tragedy, which is without excuse, is the saddest of all, from its opening at Carcassonne in 1209 to its terrible close four years later on the blood-stained Field of Muret.

Not one of those men sinned through ignorance; they acted with full consciousness and a set purpose.

It was about July 24, 1209, when the Crusaders, who had marched direct from Béziers the morning after the massacre, encamped around Carcassonne. In those days the town—the *Basse-Ville*, which owed its origin to St. Louis—did not exist. The *Bourg* climbed the slopes of the flat-topped hill rising sheer from the plain, half surrounded by the Aude (whose course since then has slightly altered, but which then as now was spanned by a fine bridge); above it, so strongly fortified as to be in those days practically impregnable, rose the lofty turreted walls of the *Haute Cité*, set at intervals with twenty-four strong towers. It was one of the most formidable fortresses of France; the only one remaining perfect for us to-day.

The next morning the young Viscount Trencavel mounted the highest tower with his barons, and beheld the Crusading hosts encamped below, their tents whitening the plain, their banners flying. The *sortie*, which he was anxious to make at once, was postponed by the advice of his friends, and it was left to the invaders to make the first attack, which they did next day, and which was repelled with gallantry and daring by the garrison. Neither side, however, could claim the victory, the losses on both sides being equally heavy. A council of war was held by the great barons in the Crusaders' camp, in which it was decided that strong measures should

be taken; and the following day the *Bourg* was carried by assault, this place being far less strongly fortified than the city itself. This brought the besiegers up to the walls. Before a general attack was made some weeks were spent in erecting "engines," such as battering-rams, and *mangonneaux*, or machines for throwing stones, against the defences; and by the middle of August the Crusaders were nearly ready to attempt the storming of Carcassonne.

The besieged spent their time in destroying the refectory and other buildings of the Canon's College, and with these materials and the stalls of the Cathedral choir they did their best to strengthen their defences. During these weeks—all the mills of the neighbourhood having been previously destroyed by the heretics—the Crusaders would have suffered terribly from famine, their only means of procuring bread being from a few friendly castles in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, bread was never wanting in their camp; it was even in such abundance that the enemy, unaware of the miraculous supply, declared the Chief Legate to be a sorcerer, and the Crusaders devils in human form who could live without food.

Meanwhile, Peter of Aragon, the suzerain of both cities, heard of the tragedy of Béziers and the impending fate of Carcassonne, whose Viscount was his vassal, ally, and friend. "For this he started forth immediately . . . not with the intention of making war on either side, but to see if he could not bring about peace and amity between the two parties . . . and having arrived he went straight to the tent of Count Raymond (of Toulouse), his brother-in-law,[1] with all his suite, men beautiful to look upon." A conference was hastily

1 Raymond VI. was married five times: (1) Dame Ermesinde of Pelet; (2) Dame Beatrix de Trencavel; (3) Princess Bourgogne, daughter of Amaury, King of Cyprus; (4) Princess Jeanne, daughter of Henry II. of England, sister of Cœur-de-Lion and John; widow of Guillaume, King of Sicily. She was the mother of Raymond VII. of Toulouse (1197). Repudiated by her husband, she died in 1199, and was buried at Fontevrault, at the feet of her brother Richard, and of her mother, Queen Eleanor of Castile; (5) Eleanor of Aragon, daughter of Alfonso II. of Aragon, sister of Peter II. Her sister Sancia married Raymond VII.

Photo: M. Michel Jordy, Carcassonne

CARCASSONNE: THE MOAT AND TOWERS OF THE CASTLE
(The Cathedral of St. Nazaire in the distance)

called, but the Legate, before deciding upon any terms, requested the king to go himself into Carcassonne and treat with Trencavel in person, which he at once prepared to do.

The young Viscount, who was high-spirited and chivalrous, made answer to Peter's representations that, so far as he was concerned personally, he would never submit to force, nor would his men-at-arms. But the city was full of women and children; the provisions and water were running short; it was impossible to hold out much longer. He therefore begged the king to open negotiations with the Legates. "I place in your hands, my lord," he cried, "myself, my people, and my career! Deal with them as you would with your own, for I commit all to you."

From this point accounts differ. One chronicler says that Trencavel refused to accept the terms offered, Peter of Aragon encouraging him in his refusal; and that after the king's departure, on the failure of his diplomatic mission, a second terrible but vain assault was made by the Crusaders, during which boiling water and melted lead were poured down upon them from the *hourdes*,[1] through which De Montfort risked his life to save that of a wounded soldier; and that only the failure of the water-supply finally reduced Carcassonne. According to this contemporary but anonymous writer, Trencavel himself came down to the besiegers' camp to make terms of peace, but was retained as a hostage; upon which his people, believing him dead, left the city secretly at night by a postern door, taking nothing with them, and fled to the neighbouring stronghold of Cabarets. The most generally-received account[2] is that the terms of peace were accepted, and Carcassonne was surrendered without a blow. In either case the result was the same; the city fell into the Crusaders' hands, and Trencavel was a prisoner. Arnauld Almeric was, above all, anxious to prevent more bloodshed and the wanton destruction of property. The citizens, however, were forced to leave Car-

[1] Projecting wooden galleries round the top of the towers. Only one is still in existence at Carcassonne.

[2] Given by Vaux-Cernay and Puy Laurens.

cassonne, leaving everything behind them; "carrying with them nothing but their sins," says Vaux-Cernay. The young Viscount was temporarily imprisoned in one of the strongest towers, his domains declared forfeited on account of his stubborn resistance,[1] and his title and estates offered by the Chief Legate first to the Duke of Burgundy, next to the Count of Nevers, thirdly to the Count of St. Pol. All refused them, on the pretext that they had already enough lands and titles of their own, but in reality for far less worthy reasons.

Then the Legate, turning to Simon de Montfort, offered these dignities to him, with that of the military command of the troops of the Crusade, of which he had already shown himself so worthy. He accepted them on condition that the other lords unanimously approved his choice, and that they would continue to support him. This promise, immediately given, was almost as soon broken, for the great northern nobles, having completed their forty days and gained the Pardon, speedily withdrew to their own territories, and left Simon de Montfort to fight alone. Fanjeaux, Montréal, Limoux, and other neighbouring strongholds immediately sent in their submission.

De Montfort was the only noble who understood and appreciated the true aim of the Pope in proclaiming the Crusade—the absolute destruction of the Albigensian heresy. The others came and went, spent a certain number of days under arms, and then, having fulfilled the conditions for gaining the Pardon, returned home, in some cases laden with spoil, deaf to the representations and prayers of the General, whose hard task was rendered a thousand times more difficult by this casual and temporary help on which it was impossible to depend. If the rebel lords lost much through their private quarrels and lack of political union, the Catholic army was also greatly weakened by the intermittent nature of the supplies which it was continually receiving, and as constantly

[1] He died of dysentery, Nov. 12, 1209, at the age of twenty-eight. The enemies of De Montfort did not scruple to accuse him of having poisoned the young Viscount.

losing again. Simon de Montfort was literally the motive power of the whole Crusade. His genuine piety, fervent enthusiasm, and intense devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, combined with unusual military genius, splendid courage, tenacity of purpose, and a thorough knowledge of the art of war, marked him out as a fitting leader for so great an enterprise. A brave soldier, he was also a born leader of men. As husband, father, and friend, the sincerity and purity of his own life (when licence was the rule, not the exception; when faithless prelates could be found to condone the conduct of such men as Raymond of Toulouse, the private life of the King of Aragon) would have alone stamped him as out of the common. His name was a talisman, not only to his enemies, who feared him as much as they hated him, but to his men, who loved him, especially the few who followed him faithfully until the nine years of his great campaign closed before the walls of Toulouse.

When the tragic story of the Albigensian Crusade comes to be written in the light of modern research, and the life of its hero given to the world, we shall be better able to appreciate one of the grandest, most misrepresented characters of mediæval warfare. His foes, of course, imputed his every action to self-interest and unconquerable love of power; his friends, beginning with his chaplain, the Cistercian historian, Peter de Vaux-Cernay, have glorified him into a kind of demi-god. From the charge of overwhelming ambition—a charge which cannot be proved from the testimony of non-partisan contemporary writers—he may well be exonerated. After all, he was human, and was placed in a difficult and dangerous position. Moreover, he can hardly be blamed for accepting dignities and honours forfeited by their owners on account of their rebellion against the Church, which, as Pope St. Pius V. reminded the Emperor Ferdinand I. nearly four centuries later, alone had the right to bestow them. The Church saw in De Montfort the "man irreproachable in all things," the servant faithful already in little, whom it was expedient to make ruler over many things.

For some it will be enough that he was the close personal friend of St. Dominic, and was evidently much influenced by him. And this friendship of Saint and soldier was destined to have wide and far-reaching results. "When this illustrious prince," says Thierry d'Apolda, "saw Dominic, the athlete of Christ, living a life so innocent, so perfect before God and man, he conceived the liveliest affection for him, and held him in the highest veneration on account of his sanctity."[1]

It is not certain whether St. Dominic was present at the siege of Carcassonne. It is possible, but not very probable. The city has many other associations with him, and it is these which we specially love to recall. For many months, with frequent intervals of absence at Prouille and Fanjeaux, and in missions, St. Dominic held the post of administrator of the diocese of Carcassonne.

He was appointed immediately after the Council of Lavaur (January 1213), during the absence of the newly-appointed Cistercian Bishop,[2] Gui de Vaux-Cernay, who with the Bishop of Toulouse had undertaken to preach the Crusade in France, even at the court of Philip Augustus.[3] The business and spiritual administration of the diocese was thus left in Dominic's hands, by the desire of both prelates, and he took up his abode in the episcopal palace,[4] close to the Cathedral of St. Nazaire. Here, during the Lent of 1213, he fasted on

[1] Bernard Gui speaks of De Montfort as the intimate and special friend of St. Dominic. "Montfort," says Blessed Jordan of Saxony, "had for the Saint a special devotion and genuine love." Finally in 1256, the Chapter-General of the Order over which Humbert de Romans presided decreed that on the anniversary of De Montfort's death, "the friend of Blessed Dominic," an "obit should be recited at the office, after the lesson, that the brothers may pray for his soul, and for his race, united to the Order by the ties of so great a devotion." Even his enemies could appreciate his noble character. "I have heard Raymond of Toulouse," writes Puy Laurens, "profess for his adversary the greatest admiration on account of his perfect fidelity, his wisdom and courage, and because he possessed all the qualities which go to the making of a great and accomplished prince."

[2] The bishopric of Carcassonne was founded in 550.

[3] On Ash Wednesday, February 27, 1213, we find both prelates at Paris, attending the *Parlement* tardily convoked by the King of France to consider the question of his son's departure to join De Montfort, and to decide who should accompany him; but Prince Louis did not start until 1215.

[4] This palace no longer exists, but its site is occupied by the old Hotel de la Cité and its garden, from which there is a magnificent view.

bread and water, giving himself incessantly to preaching, and refusing to sleep on a bed or anywhere but on the ground. Fr. Etienne de Metz tells us that as Easter approached the Saint declared that he felt stronger than ever; "and this indeed he seemed," adds the good brother naïvely, "for he looked both fresh and well." What Lenten sermons must those have been in the grand old Roman nave of St. Nazaire by the first Friar Preacher! Of what long watches, cruel disciplines, fervent and passionate prayers have those ancient walls been the witnesses! For "besides the particular supplications with which the needs and events of every day supplied him, he had the cause of the Universal Church present in his heart; he prayed for the expansion of the Faith in the souls of Christians, for the people still fast bound in the slavery of error, for the suffering souls in purgatory."

St. Nazaire, which in 1898 was erected into a Basilica, has well been called the principal jewel in the mediæval crown of Carcassonne. More than half of the entire building—the Roman nave (the materials for which were blessed by Pope Urban II. in 1096 on his passage through Carcassonne), the western façade, and the chapel of Our Lady (the last remodelled but not radically changed),—remain to-day just as they were in the days of our Saint. The mighty round pillars of the nave, like the trunks of giant oak-trees, the semicircular arches which unite them, the severe simplicity of the square capitals all convey a sense of peace, of immutable strength. If the Gothic arch aspires and inspires, the Roman impresses and overawes. The beautiful choir and transepts, the latter lighted by two exquisite rose-windows, are pure Gothic, and were begun at the close of the thirteenth century. The cathedral is built in the form of a T-cross, and as, standing outside the sanctuary, one looks down the wide nave, the story of Constantine d'Orvieto comes involuntarily into one's mind.

There had come a time, after four years' warfare, when it seemed as if the enemies of the Truth were to prevail, and the hearts of the bravest were beginning to grow heavy. "A

Cistercian lay brother [1] who abode with the Saint, was moved to the deepest sorrow by these untoward happenings, and once in his misery he approached the man of God. "Master Dominic," he said, "will these evils never have an end?" The Saint kept silence, but the brother, well aware that God revealed many things to him, pressed for an answer. Finally, in presence of his companion, Fr. Etienne de Metz, who frequently told the story, St. Dominic cried aloud: "Yes, the malice of the Toulousains will have an end, but not yet! The blood of many will be shed, and a king will perish in a great battle." At these words, Fr. Etienne and the Cistercian were afraid that the Saint spoke of the King of France, who had so recently put his hand to the work of the Crusade. "Fear nothing for the King of France," replied Dominic; "it is another king who soon shall lose his life in this present war!"

Less than six months later, Peter of Aragon fell at Muret.

This prediction was made at Carcassonne between 27th February and 24th March 1213; probably, says P. Balme, on the latter date, the fourth Sunday in Lent. A few days later Simon de Montfort visited "Brother Dominic," his "dear Prior," to make his Easter duties, to spend a few quiet hours in the restful presence of his friend, to make him a fresh gift of lands for Prouille, and to take counsel with him as to the conduct of the war.

Here in June 1214, St. Dominic, assisted by the Bishop of Toulouse, married Amaury,[2] eldest son of De Montfort, to Beatrix, daughter of the Dauphin of the Viennois, and niece of the Duke of Burgundy. "At this time," remarks Gérard de Frachet, "the Count de Montfort, fighting the heretics with a sword of steel, and St. Dominic with that of the spirit, became so intimate that the Count desired above all things that the Saint should bless the marriage of his son at Carcassonne." On this occasion great gifts were offered to Dominic by the nobles present, for Prouille; and De Montfort bestowed on the Bishop of Toulouse the Castle of Verfeil.

[1] Belonging, of course, to the Cistercian Bishop's household.
[2] Or Almeric.

Here, too, on 6th May 1216, in presence of King Louis VIII., St. Dominic heard his friend, De Montfort, recognised as Lord Paramount of the conquered territories—an honour so hardly won, so short a time enjoyed!

On the western wall of the south transept is a large and curious monumental stone, representing in outline a knight armed and helmed. It is the stone placed over the grave of Simon de Montfort in 1218, when he was buried here in St. Nazaire. Later, when his remains were removed to his native Isle of France, the stone was embedded in the wall. There is no inscription, nothing special to mark it. Yet St. Dominic looked upon this stone with tears, as it covered the body of the friend he was so soon to follow. Near it, also incrusted in the wall, is an extraordinarily interesting fragment of sculpture in low relief, popularly known as the Siege Stone, and which is believed to represent the Siege of Carcassonne.[1] The whole Cathedral, indeed, teems with interest, archæological as well as historical, and must be explored again and again to be properly appreciated.

St. Nazaire, however, is only one place connected with our Saint in Carcassonne. Everyone of the steep, winding, fine-cobbled streets he knew by heart — the inner ring of fortifications, the grand old castle. It was St. Louis who, fifty years later, built the outer circle of ramparts, the defences of which were completed by his successors; who, in fact, left it much as we see it to-day, after its recent careful restoration by that prince of architects, M. Viollet le Duc. But Carcassonne was a fortified city under the Visigoths in the sixth century; its dateless walls were originally built by the Romans two hundred years earlier and more. Their fine brick-work can still be seen at the foot of many of the ancient towers. It was as such St. Dominic knew it.

The High City now is guarded by a double circle of walls and towers, between which lies a path called the Lists,[2] wide enough in one place for tilts and tourneys, narrowing in others

[1] Or Toulouse. [2] *Les Lices.*

to a mere stone passage between grim fortifications. It is a pleasant walk hither from the station, which is on the other side of the *Basse Ville*,[1] through the quaint old town founded by St. Louis to the bridge, from which so beautiful a view of the High City may be gained. Beyond this thirteenth-century bridge a steep path for pedestrians branches off to the right, towards the Porte de l'Aude, from the wider carriage road which winds round the hill to the only other gate of the city, the Porte de Narbonne.

At the first sight of Carcassonne one finds it hard to believe that anything so lovely, so marvellously mediæval can still exist in the prosaic France of the twentieth century! It is the vision of a dream transmuted into stone. No mere description can really give an idea of the High City, throned on her hill and crowned with towers. Pictures are more effectual, but even the best fall far short of the reality. To visit Carcassonne is to return to the Middle Ages. Its spell is irresistible. It is as if one lighted unexpectedly upon a page from some ancient illuminated missal bound up in a modern book of travels! Its people, too, are astonishingly conservative. Let us mount the steep stone path which faces the west and overlooks the river to the Porte de l'Aude; and having gazed upon the beauty of the city from without, go and study it from within.

It is best to begin by making the circuit of the Lists, between the double walls, if possible, twice. The inner ring of fortifications cannot be explored without a guide, but everyone is free to wander in the Lists, and examine the outer walls and towers, and the exterior of the inner ones. It will take about three hours to make the entire circuit of the city twice, intelligently and fairly quickly. The chances are we shall meet no one. It is curious how few people seem to visit Carcassonne. Strangers in plenty are to be met with at Arles, at Nîmes, at glorious Avignon,

[1] The *Basse Ville* is interesting, and possesses some fine churches, notably those of St. Michael (thirteenth century) and St. Vincent (fourteenth century), the latter with a magnificent roof, considered unique.

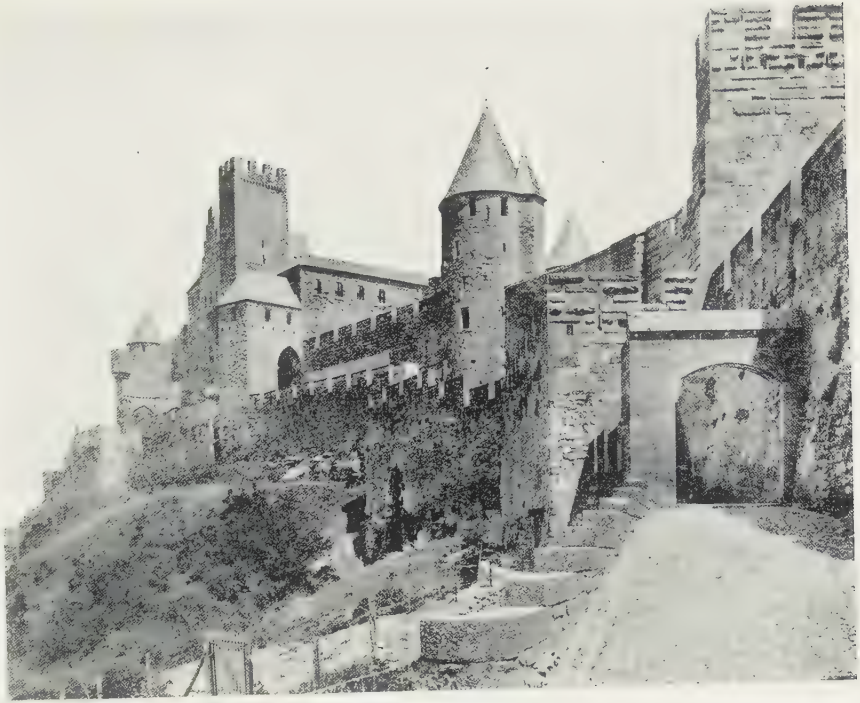


Photo: M. Michel Jordy, Carcassonne

CARCASSONNE: "LA PORTE DE L'AUDE"

but with the exception of antiquarians and archæologists visitors[1] to this at least equally ancient city are comparatively rare.

No fewer than forty-three grand towers are set in the walls, including the Barbican, the two gates, and the six towers of the castle, that noble "fortress within a fortress" into which the besieged might retire if by chance the double ramparts were stormed, and there hold out indefinitely. Built on Roman bases by Count Roger I. in the eleventh century, it is surrounded by deep moats on all sides except that which overhangs the brow of the precipice. Turning to the right before entering the Porte de l'Aude, we pass through a splendid vaulted entrance into the *Hautes Lices*. It is a wide, grassy road, between lofty, tower-set walls, full of peace and silence, of memories impressive beyond all words. The second tower to the right is the magnificent *Tour de l'Evêque*—the Bishop's Tower, built by Philip the Bold, the only square tower in the ramparts. Each of the forty-three has a name—and such names!—*Tour du grand Canissou*, *du grand Burlas*, *des Prisons*, *du Plô*, *Pouléto*, *de la Vade*—the last a grand building four storeys high, the earliest constructed by St. Louis, forming in itself an impregnable fortress. There are nineteen on the outer wall and twenty-four within.

At the Porte de Narbonne[2] we stop instinctively to wonder at the curious defences, the huge chain by which the gate was secured, at the extraordinary ingenuity with which the approaches are engineered, the road turning at such angles as to prevent the assailants, if they attempted to storm the gate, from making a direct attack, but compelling them to twist and approach obliquely. This gate is reached by a double drawbridge and magnificently guarded by a Barbican only inferior in size and strength to the Great Barbican close to the Porte de l'Aude. The Lists on this, the eastern side of the city, are called the *Petites Lices*.

[1] English.

[2] Or Porte Narbonnaise.

But it is the inner ring of towers which will especially appeal to us. At the foot of at least twenty of the twenty-four can be traced the Roman foundations, huge blocks of quarried stone, or fine "fishbone" brickwork, upon nine of which rises the more barbaric but equally distinctive masonry of the Visigoths. One, the *Tour de Samson*, is of Visigothic origin and workmanship; another, the splendid *Tour Pinte*, belonging to the defences of the castle, is now the sole trace of the Saracenic occupation of Carcassonne. Here and there the Roman masonry has actually been underpinned and supported by that of the thirteenth century —evidently by St. Louis. The walls between the towers, or *courtines*, are also of absorbing interest. Here is a walled postern-gate; there an ancient well; now and then a loophole intended for the discharge of arrows has been altered to accommodate a firearm. Above the Roman brickwork in the curious *Tour de St. Sernin* can be seen two beautiful Gothic windows, the only remains of the ancient church of that name, which were opened in 1441 to throw light upon the High Altar. This perfect little church, almost entirely contained within the tower, was unhappily destroyed in 1793. It is here that the most interesting traces of Roman foundations appear.

Space fails me to describe the Great Barbican, that masterpiece of defence, almost demolished in 1815 in order that a factory might be built with its huge stones; so perfectly restored to-day; which frowns down upon the *Basse Ville* and the river. Space fails me to speak of the wonderful castle, surrounded by its six strong towers, whose crumbling stone bridge spans the dry moat, replacing the more ancient drawbridge. It is to-day unfortunately a barracks, and the soldiers of the French Republic swarm in the grand old halls which echoed to the tramp of mailed feet and the clang of armour, through which De Montfort and St. Dominic have so often passed. Round the summit of the *Tour des Casernes* the wooden *hourdes* still remain.

The finest view of all is gained from the inner ramparts,

within which the old stairways and stone walks and passages have been carefully restored. The circuit of the city should be made at least four times, however limited one's stay may be. Twice round the Lists in daylight (for this I would venture to suggest a fine spring or autumn morning, when as a rule butterflies and lizards have the place to themselves); once by moonlight, the effect of which upon the age-old towers and crumbling masonry is indescribable. For this reason the date of one's visit should be carefully selected. The fourth circuit should be round the inner ramparts on the top of the wall.

This last expedition should be made in the evening, when one can watch the sunset, alone, from the top of the highest tower, the obliging guide returning when it is all over. It is possible to enter most of the towers from the walls. One looks down into the black depths of dungeons where so many prisoners have languished, or sits on the massive stone benches within the embrasures of the narrow loop-holes whence the Visigoths watched the Saracens pouring across the plain; on which Trencavel threw himself in despair after gazing at the terrible army below; where Simon de Montfort had rested, and St. Dominic watched and prayed, his eyes ever turned towards Prouille.

But on no account must the sunset be missed from the summit of the *Tour de St. Nazaire,* just above the recently-excavated Roman theatre and close to the Cathedral. It is the highest point of the walls.

Facing west, beyond the shining river and the grey roofs of the town down below, the beautiful country rolls, seemingly limitless, to the horizon. To the right is the Montagne Noire, to the left the full moon is rising above a landscape of low hills yellow with stubble, each field marked off as on a map by heavy lines of dark cypresses, a curious picture, reminding one, as at Prouille, of the Holy Land. Behind, to the east, the plain stretches hazy and indistinct towards the invisible towers of distant Narbonne, and the Mediterranean. And opposite, ten miles away across a confusion of tumbled

hills the fortress-church of Montréal stands clearly out against the sunset.

It is a cloudy evening after a day of glorious sunshine. Long lines of gorgeous cloud float across a sky of changing scarlet, a fire with a red-hot centre behind bars of watery purple, melting as one watches it into golden feathery islands upon a sea of palest crimson. Those blue, cloud-swathed, indistinguishable summits far away to the south-west are the Pyrenees.

Slowly the painted sky fades and pales to the shadowy tints of pearl. The place is nearly two thousand years old; it is still redolent of St. Dominic's presence; tragic with history; alive with the spirit of the past. But if it were none of these things it would be good to see such a sunset over St. Dominic's country from the walls of the High City of Carcassonne!

Photo: M. Michel Jordy, Carcassonne

THE RAMPARTS OF CARCASSONNE: "TOUR DE L'INQUISITION"

XIV

THE COUNCILS AT NARBONNE

The fifteen months which elapsed between the taking of Carcassonne and the close of the year 1210, though unmarked by historic sieges or decisive battles, were nevertheless so important that it is necessary slightly to sketch the events which had taken place during their course in order clearly to understand the position of affairs when in January 1211 St. Dominic, De Montfort, the Legates, and a large number of Bishops and prelates met Peter of Aragon, Raymond of Toulouse, and many of the heretic nobles at the Council of Narbonne. This will perhaps be done most effectively if we outline briefly the doings of the chief persons concerned.

St. Dominic, who had kept apart from the war, had spent the time at Carcassonne, Prouille, and Fanjeaux, besides visiting and preaching in a large number of towns and villages throughout Languedoc, and in all probability paying his first visit to Albi, during his tour in the Albigensian district. He was doubtless at Prouille when on 1st September 1209, Simon de Montfort, accompanied by the Bishop of Toulouse and a large number of knights, passed the little convent on his way to take possession of the castle of Fanjeaux, which had yielded to him. We have direct evidence of the Saint's presence during this time in Languedoc, for from June 1205 to the Lateran Council of 1215 "Blessed Dominic remained almost alone in the Narbonnais, above all in the Toulousain, the Carcassés, and the Albigeois, where the pestilential heresy raged most furiously." But history is silent as to his particular acts. "If the men-at-arms on either side, in their

expeditions, met Dominic by the wayside, they found him barefoot, staff in hand, in clothes old and worn, in the poverty of Christ accomplishing in peace and security his apostolic mission." It is scarcely possible to add to that picture.

Simon de Montfort, who had been joined by his heroic wife, Countess Alix, had suffered the bitter pain of seeing the great army which had reduced Carcassonne melt away like snow in sunshine, for the bulk of the men, both nobles and commoners, having served their forty days and gained the Pardon, immediately returned home. Thereupon nearly all the castles and strongholds which had sent in their submission, withdrew it, and welcomed the heretics back. For a year his ceaseless task of subduing, attacking, besieging and punishing seemed almost hopeless, for, like a fire which cannot be trodden out under foot, no sooner had he succeeded in stamping out the flame in one place than half a dozen others, twenty, fifty, a hundred miles off, broke out into open rebellion. His most notable exploit was the siege and capture of the hitherto impregnable Château de Thermes, five leagues from Carcassonne, during which he had one of his many miraculous escapes from death. Standing beneath the walls "to superintend the operation of a certain little machine commonly called a *cat*,"[1] his hand on a friend's shoulder, a huge stone thrown from above struck his companion on the head, so that he fell dead into De Montfort's arms, who himself had received no hurt.

Many pages might be covered with the details of the war of 1210, complicated as it was by the treachery of friends, as well as of the vanquished, but the story must be read in the book of contemporary history. It is enough to say that in spite of his successes everything was against De Montfort, for as he had scarcely enough men to garrison the fortresses he subdued, and could not always trust those whom he did leave in charge, he was compelled in many cases to destroy these

[1] Used for undermining.

strongholds, which he was most reluctant to do. Still, he persevered, in spite of discouragements, and in all his troubles his best friend and adviser was the Saint of Languedoc.

The Legates had been passing through an equally difficult, if less dangerous time. The Abbot of Citeaux had been driven to decisive measures by the hopeless shuffling and double-dealing of Raymond VI., who had joined the Crusaders, and had conducted them to Béziers and Carcassonne. Then, having as he considered sufficiently redeemed his pledges, he left the army in September 1209. Pope Innocent, with Christ-like charity, had forbidden his being pressed severely to keep promises which were beyond his strength, so long as he remained faithful to the Church. But the Legates, who were on the spot, who had had bitter experience of Raymond already, and who knew him as the Pope did not, saw in him the enemy whose influence for evil was deep and widespread, whose hand was for ever secretly against the Crusade, who could not be trusted for an instant. The cause of the first event which showed the Count in his true colours was a summons addressed to him by the Chief Legate, immediately after the taking of Carcassonne, to deliver up to him the heretics and suspects of Toulouse. Raymond professed great indignation, saying that the Abbot evidently suspected him of heresy, and declaring that he would go there and then to Rome and seek a personal interview with the Pope. This, in effect, he did, arriving at the Eternal City in January 1210.

Meanwhile the Legate, convinced of the righteousness of his cause, and of his judgment of Raymond, a judgment in the end more than justified, excommunicated first the Consuls of Toulouse who had frantically supported their Count's action, and shortly afterwards, at a council held at Avignon (September 1209), that nobleman himself. The sentence, however, was conditional, as it was not to take effect until the Feast of All Saints, thus giving Raymond over a month in which to obey the commands laid upon him. At the same time

letters were sent by the whole body of Legates—for Blessed Peter of Castelnau and Brother Raoul had been replaced by the Bishop of Uzés and another prelate, Maître Thédise—to the Pope, begging him not to believe Raymond's representations. "Distrust the tongue so prone to distil evil," wrote the envoy Milon, who had lately reconciled the Count at St. Gilles.

Of Raymond's reception by the Holy Father contrary accounts are given, but Pope Innocent himself writes: "The Count of Toulouse having come to Rome, and having promised to give Us entire satisfaction, We have thought well to honour him." Promises had always been easy to Raymond; it was only in the keeping of them he found any difficulty. It seemed as if he had succeeded in deceiving Innocent himself—what a triumph over the stern Legate in France! Raymond, who loved nothing better than annoying the Abbot of Citeaux, was not the man to let such an opportunity slip. He prevailed upon the Pope to write to the Legates that as Raymond had sworn that he had ever been unjustly suspected of heresy, as he had produced documents to prove his orthodoxy, the Church must not be enriched at his expense, and that, finally, his domains were not to be interfered with!

"Three months after the reception of this letter," continues the Pope, "the Legates shall again meet to decide whether Raymond is really guilty of the two crimes imputed to him." [1] The culprit meanwhile had been making fresh, but unsuccessful advances to the King of France and the Emperor Otho, neither of whom was disposed to take up his quarrel. In spite of the Pope's letter it is perfectly evident that the knowledge of his own guilt was so strong upon Raymond that he feared to trust himself to Arnauld Almeric, though he held the whole Toulousain under his hand.

The Consuls of Toulouse had also returned triumphant from Rome—for Pope Innocent ever leant to mercy—having

[1] Heresy, and the murder of B. Peter of Castelnau, both of which he strenuously denied, though he had done penance for the second.

there made submission, with the document containing their pardon in their hands, addressed to the three Legates. Thereafter ensued a complicated history of submission, reconciliation, fresh demands by the Legate, fresh insubordination, and finally a second excommunication. Arnauld Almeric was not the man to give way in face of difficulties, or to take the easier course when his judgment and conscience pointed out the harder. Toulouse, refusing to repudiate Raymond, was declared disobedient and heretical, and placed under an interdict, the clergy being bidden to carry forth the Blessed Sacrament from all the churches in the town.

Shortly after, at another Council held at St. Gilles, Raymond was summoned, according to the Pope's instructions, to justify himself of the double charge of heresy and murder. He appeared—he could scarcely do otherwise—but when he was informed that before he could be heard in his own defence he must keep the first of his sworn promises, that of driving the heretics from all his territories, he flatly refused to obey, and left the Council in tears of rage, leaping into his saddle and galloping off towards his own country. Matters were at a deadlock. "He has failed to prove his innocence," wrote Innocent III. sadly to the King of France. This was the state of affairs when in January 1211 all the prelates and statesmen of the Midi were summoned to attend a great Council at Narbonne.

Two other actors in the grim drama must be mentioned before we pass on to the Council itself. Raymond Roger, Count of Foix, the "wild beast let loose," we have already met at Pamiers, but it is necessary here to note that as the King of Aragon's vassal, and especially since the death of Trencavel, his influence in the country was very great. Second in importance of the heretic lords, he openly protected the Catharists, and was a man whose atrocious crimes against the Church, civilisation, and nature itself are best left unrecorded. He had, after the capitulation of Carcassonne, submitted to De Montfort, but the moment he saw the conqueror's hands were

weakened he repudiated his oath. His reconciliation was one of the questions now to be discussed, and the King of Aragon, his suzerain, had made himself responsible for him.

Of Peter of Aragon himself, "the embarrassment of the whole Crusade," as a modern writer[1] terms him, this at least can be said: that while still posing as a Catholic champion (we find him in 1212 actually taking part with the Chief Legate in a Crusade against the Saracens in Spain), as the gracious mediator between the conflicting parties, he was, and had been for fifteen months, privately encouraging among his numerous vassals open rebellion against De Montfort. The war was touching him too nearly, and Peter of Aragon did not intend to sit still and see De Montfort dispossessing one after another of his nobles without striking many a secret blow in their defence—or rather, in his own. He had persistently refused to accept De Montfort's homage for Carcassonne, and did his best in a royal and disinterested manner to make things very uncomfortable for him. It was well known that he was persuading as many persons as possible to do homage to himself instead of to the conqueror; a proposal to which they were delighted to agree. He had even been asked by the rebel nobles to head their opposition to the Crusade, but this he had wisely refused to do—as yet. It was scarcely possible to suspect, quite impossible to accuse him of heresy. Yet in his heart every man present knew perfectly that Peter of Aragon, as far as his sympathies went, was working secretly against the Crusade.

The first question to be discussed at the Council was the inevitable one of Raymond of Toulouse. This worthy, who was at present posing as one suffering patiently under a great and unjust accusation, appeared to "justify" himself; a process through which he hoped, by the making of all the fresh promises which might be desired of him, that he should be left in peaceable possession of all his lands. "Great grace was granted him if he had but acquiesced in the wise counsels

[1] Luchair.

of the Legate." A fourth, even a third part of the conquered castles was promised to him if he would, like an honest man, stand to his sworn oath—like a Catholic Christian do all in his power to help, not hinder the Legates in their difficult task. But Raymond refused, as might have been expected. He probably knew the mind of Peter of Aragon better than anyone present, and he counted on his support, open or secret. Again matters were at a standstill, and the Count of Toulouse, who would have preferred to be called a Catholic had the title not entailed the obligations insisted upon by Arnauld Almeric, again left the Council in a rage. The next point was the reconciliation of the Count de Foix. Peter of Aragon was not anxious to see De Montfort established at Foix, one of the strongest castles on the borders of Spain, beneath his very eyes. But Raymond Roger was not the man blindly to become the tool of the intriguing Spanish prince, even though he was his friend. All he wanted was that De Montfort should give him back Pamiers, which was now in his hands, and he hoped that by timely and judicious submission this might come to pass.

The Council deliberated on this matter, at the request of Peter of Aragon, and decided that if "this most monstrous persecutor" would submit, and strictly observe certain conditions, all his conquered territory should be restored to him —except Pamiers, which on no account, for sufficient reasons, could be granted. "But God . . . by His profound and incomprehensible judgment so hardened the heart of the Count of Foix that he would not receive these conditions of peace." It was, of course, perfectly clear that any "submission" he made would have been utterly false, as events were to prove. Once re-established at Pamiers he would have repudiated his oath.

But even now Peter of Aragon did not despair. He promised to become surety for Raymond Roger's good behaviour—the Count, whatever he was, was no diplomat—and promised as suzerain, to garrison Foix with his own men, "so that in all the country round no harm should be done to

Christianity." Moreover, he swore to the Legates that if Raymond Roger in future "should ever withdraw from the Communion of Holy Church and the familiar friendship and service of the Count de Montfort, he, Peter, with his own hands would deliver up the castle of Foix to the chief of the Crusaders, at the first request made to him by the Legate." He further caused letters-patent to be written, embodying this oath, and signed them with his own hand. Puy Laurens, who records these facts, had seen and examined these papers. Anything was better, thought the wily King, than to see De Montfort master from Carcassonne to the Pyrenees.

And then, the question of Foix being settled, he played his final card. After allowing the Legates to plead with him for some time, he consented then and there to receive De Montfort's homage for Carcassonne. He vastly enjoyed the spectacle of the Abbot of Citeaux and the Bishop of Uzés on their knees, as they made their supplication, while Simon de Montfort knelt beside them, ready to offer the homage so long disdained. However, after swearing fealty to the King of Aragon, De Montfort was almost overwhelmed with marks of that prince's friendship. As soon as the Council was over, Peter proposed that they should journey together to his city of Montpellier, where negotiations for the marriage of the Count's little daughter to the young son of the King were begun, but speedily broken off. Peter, however, left in charge of Simon de Montfort, as surety for his oath, his three-year-old son, child of Marie de Montpellier, the unloved, neglected, and deeply-wronged wife whom he had married to make himself master of her inheritance. The little boy was to become the future King James I. of Aragon, friend of St. Raymond of Pennafort. A greater proof of confidence could not have been given. The King knew his man.

The results of the Council, from which so much had been hoped, were meagre—or so it seemed at first. Still, something definite had been arrived at; Raymond of Toulouse had been brought to bay; the Wolf of Foix temporarily

chained and muzzled; outwardly at least the Legates might count upon Peter of Aragon. They could at least see their way clearly before them. St. Dominic, who had taken part in the deliberations, probably remained with the Legates for a time; his counsels were much needed, and Arnauld of Citeaux knew their value. Plans had to be made for the spring campaign, for it was evident that the heresy must now be attacked by the sword, all other means having failed, in Raymond's own dominions.

Sixteen months later we find St. Dominic again at Narbonne in company with Foulques of Toulouse, who had accompanied him thither from Fanjeaux, 27th April 1212, for the ceremony of the consecration of Arnauld Almeric, Abbot of Citeaux, as Archbishop of Narbonne, and of Gui de Vaux-Cernay as Bishop of Carcassonne, which was to take place on 2nd May. All the bishops and prelates of Provence and Languedoc were present, and assisted at the Council which followed, when a question of burning interest was discussed—that of delivering Spain from the yoke of the African Mussulman. "Innocent III. had proclaimed a Crusade against the Moors, already masters of a considerable part of the Spanish peninsula, and apparently about to subjugate it entirely. Already the Kings of Aragon and Navarre had set out for the war; numerous barons . . . were advancing under the command of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and many other Crusaders were preparing to depart. Arnauld Almeric burnt with desire to put himself at their head. With what emotions must the chivalrous soul of Dominic have glowed when he heard the Archbishop publicly announce that he was about to lead an army to fight the Saracens, who were on the point of invading Castile?"

It is possible to guess them when we think of that noble youth who had once offered to take the place of a certain prisoner of the Saracens, whose life was so precious to his family. He must have longed to accompany the Archbishop, but he knew it was impossible. God had other designs for

him, and he was content to fulfil them. His work lay on the other side of the Pyrenees. Less than a week later, on 7th May, we find him back at Prouille, returning to his quiet hidden days of unremitting toil, and his nights of almost ceaseless prayer; while the tramp of the great army of the Saracenic Crusade died away on the wide road which leads between the mountains and the sea, by way of Perpignan into Spain!

Narbonne, where these events took place, is the mother of the ancient cities of France. Six centuries B.C., long before its colonisation by the Phœnicians and Greeks, a Celtic people dwelt here. It was even then the most important market between the Ebro and the Rhone. In 118 B.C. it was the capital of the Volscian kingdom, dedicated to Mars under the name of *Narbo-Martius*. It was finally taken by the Romans (after the unsuccessful attempt of Licinius Crassus in 118 B.C.) in 45 B.C. and became the Roman capital in Gaul. It had a theatre as magnificent as that of Arles, of which some vaulted arches still remain in the cellars of a few houses near the Cathedral; an amphitheatre which, judging by its area, was at least equal to those of Arles and Nimes; and a magnificent Forum surrounded with arcades. Here was erected in 11 A.D. the altar to "Rome and Augustus" which is now in the museum of the city, the museum which was once the Palace of the Archbishop of Narbonne, in which so many Councils, including the two described, have been held. In those palmy days Narbonne possessed 60–70,000 inhabitants, and was one of the most famous towns of the Western world, with temples to Jupiter Tonans, Bacchus, and Minerva; a mint, an establishment for dyeing stuffs in the imperial purple, countless bazaars, fountains, and a splendid Triumphal Arch. All was swept away in the barbarian invasions; for what the Visigoths left the Saracens appropriated. In the great mosque of Cordova stood many of the columns of priceless marble brought by the Arabs from Narbonne.

One reason for the state and splendour of the ancient Roman capital was that Narbonne was then a seaport. It was situated on the delta of the Aude, which at the time of the Roman conquest was rapidly silting up, though the Phœnicians had sailed to the very gates of the city. The Romans made a fine maritime canal, digging its bed right across the shallow lagoon, a canal which can still be traced for some hundred yards beneath the waters of the Étang de Sigéan, where yet lie the enormous rectangular blocks of stone which formed its walls, unhurt by the passing of eighteen centuries. Again ships sailed up to the gates of the town—a thing hitherto impossible for any but small vessels. The sea was in so many of its streets that it has been called the Sister of Venice. One branch of the Aude was banked up in order to strengthen and increase the speed of the current in the other, so that the canal should not be choked with mud. Even to-day the spot where the Spanish boats were moored to the quay is called the *Place des Catalans*.

But after the Saracenic invasion the canal was no longer cared for. It silted up; the port became by slow degrees a marsh. But it was not till 1320 that the Roman dyke gave way, and the waters of the Aude, returning to their original course, completed the destruction. In St. Dominic's day it was still a seaport, but in the fourteenth century, the canal forgotten and the dyke broken, Narbonne was left high and dry upon a sandy plain from which the sea is still, though slowly, receding. At the close of the seventeenth century Narbonne is contemptuously spoken of by a contemporary writer as the "City of Mud."

Christianity was first preached here by Sergius Paulus in the third century, and both under the Romans and under the Visigoths, who seized Narbonne in 413, the persecutions were severe. The city was the Visigothic capital until 719, when it was conquered by the Saracens, who in their turn were driven out by Pepin. This great soldier made Narbonne the capital of his new marquisate of Gothia. Under his rule it was divided into three parts: the City, governed by the Arch-

bishop; the Borough, ruled by a Viscount; and the New Town, corresponding to the Italian *ghetto*, where the Jews were allowed to live and pursue their various trades, particularly that of money-lending, and these divisions it retained till long after St. Dominic's day.

The pilgrim who visits Narbonne to-day to look for traces of St. Dominic, will be disappointed. Its grand, unfinished Cathedral was begun in 1272, and the choir—for it has no nave—was not completed till the fifteenth century. Beautiful as it is, it contains, with the exception of some treasures in the sacristy, nothing anterior to the time of our Saint. The oldest church in the town, that of St. Paul-Serge, with its grand Roman nave, dates from the eleventh century, and is fortified. The only two other buildings with which St. Dominic could have been acquainted are, curiously enough, both museums. One, in his day the church of a great Benedictine monastery, the Lamourguier, was founded in the eleventh century, and rebuilt towards the close of the twelfth. The other, for those who have the heart to explore it—I for one confess I had not—is the Archbishop's Palace, where he was more than once a guest. It is a grim, fortress-like building of Roman foundation, and one tower and chapel date from the eleventh century. In 1833 it was turned into a museum, and houses a wonderful collection of Roman remains. Here ruled the mighty Archbishops of Narbonne, who took the title of Primates of *Gaule Narbonnaise*, and were by right of their position presidents of the Council of the States of Languedoc for nearly 1000 years, until in 1790 the Archiepiscopal see was made a suffragan of that of Toulouse. Twelve years later the diocese was "suppressed," the title being retained by the Archbishop of Toulouse, and the diocese itself becoming merged in that of Carcassonne. The Town Hall, built some sixty years ago by Viollet le Duc on thirteenth century lines, now forms part of the building which was once the Archbishop's palace.

Narbonne is more than disappointing: it is depressing. More than any other city of the Midi it has suffered from

wholesale destruction, and restoration has scarcely been attempted. It seems as if the *laissez-aller* spirit so characteristic of the South had taken entire possession of it; so that its people lacked courage to build up their ruins, or even to complete what had already been begun. It is a large, prosperous, modern town whose ancient glory has wholly departed. It is true that in the sixteenth century the ramparts were partly restored, the Cardinal-Archbishop Briçonnet using for the purpose all the ancient monuments on which he could lay his hands, and that the retrieved fragments of broken sculpture, carefully collected in 1872, are now to be seen at the Lamourguier. But that was the only considerable effort made. The grand choir of the Cathedral of St. Just stands alone, guarded by its two square towers, and supported by its exquisite flying buttresses, a pathetic monument of pale brown stone which, since the fifteenth century, has in vain called for completion.

Narbonne escaped the fate of Béziers in 1209. The Archbishop and Viscount came to the Crusaders' camp upon the destruction of the latter city, and swore fidelity to the Chief Legate. The army did not even visit Narbonne.

The interior of the fortified Cathedral is very beautiful, though it is a curious mixture of styles. In the eighteenth century a "vestibule" was added to the mediæval structure; the high altar is of the seventeenth, and the beautiful windows, filled with glass like melted jewels, are of the fourteenth century. The slender pillars are like nothing but a grove of lofty, graceful, Indian palm-trees, their capitals mere rings of stone.

And above the only public entrance to the Cathedral, the pilgrim may read, in great faded letters of red and blue, the three words: "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité."

XV

THE SIEGE OF LAVAUR

Lavaur is a picturesque, unspoilt, out-of-the-way little town to which nobody ever goes! Situated on the wide plain between Toulouse and the first undulations of the Cevennes, it forms one of the points of an almost equilateral triangle, of which the other two are Castres and Albi, and it can conveniently be reached from either of these towns. It possesses a beautiful, wide *Place*, close-set with the inevitable small cobble-stones, and studded by lines of plane-trees; many narrow picturesque streets of ancient houses, two fine bridges across the muddy Agout, a thirteenth to sixteenth century Cathedral, and a terrible, tragic history.

The origin of Lavaur is unknown, but its castle is mentioned for the first time in 1036, and its first charters of liberty date from 1209. It then belonged to the Trencavel family. The bishopric, erected in 1317, was "suppressed" at the Revolution. The ancient church of St. Alain, which was comparatively small, was rebuilt gradually, from 1255 onwards, and was completed in the sixteenth century. It became the Cathedral of the new diocese of Lavaur. In St. Dominic's day the town was a strongly fortified place of some importance, with a formidable castle on the banks of the Agout, of which nothing remains, held by Dame Giraude, sister of Almeric, seigneur of Montréal, a *Parfaite* no longer young, and of unenviable fame.

It was early in Lent 1211, when the Crusaders encamped before Lavaur, which, as part of the Countship of Carcassonne, should long ago have submitted to De Montfort. Four hundred *Parfaits* had taken refuge here, for the city was

considered impregnable. The Catharist interest in the place was enormously strong. Almeric, who had taken refuge with his sister, was, as we have seen, a fervent partisan of the sect. It was necessary that this nest of heresy should be destroyed before going any further.

A contemporary historian says that the siege lasted six months, but this is an exaggeration. Lavaur was taken on 3rd May 1211; all accounts agree that the siege was long and painful, and it was probably invested not many weeks after the Council of Narbonne, in January of the same year. De Montfort's army had been well reinforced, and the white tents of the Crusaders stretched across the plain through which the Agout creeps towards the Tarn. Across the former river the Crusaders had constructed a wooden bridge, which enabled them to reach the foot of the castle, and to attempt to undermine the fortifications. After the first few weeks they suffered greatly from famine. Their supplies should have come from the great market of Toulouse, but though the Consuls—who after their recent experiences were anxious to prove their good faith, for who knew when Toulouse herself should be threatened?—were only too willing to provide all that was necessary, Count Raymond, by all the means in his power, opposed them. He had visited the Crusaders' camp at the beginning of the siege. There he had met two of his near kinsmen, the Count of Auxerre, and Robert de Courtenay, who both "admonished" him so severely to return to his duties, to serve the Church and keep her commandments, that, furious, he "departed from De Montfort's army with great bitterness and indignation, with the soldiers who had accompanied him, and . . . forbade the Toulousains to bring any more provisions to Lavaur."

It was the first openly hostile step he had dared to take, though he had secretly sent a number of his knights, before the arrival of the Crusaders, to garrison the city, in spite of its having been for many years the enemy of Toulouse. However, the provisions still arrived, though in less quantity.

In Mid-Lent a fresh complication occurred. Foulques, the

Bishop of Toulouse, desired to hold an ordination in his Cathedral, and as this was impossible while Raymond, the triply excommunicated, was in the city, he begged him to absent himself while the sacred rites were performed.

"Great was the rage of the tyrant, and sending a knight to the bishop, he enjoined him, at the price of his life, to quit Toulouse himself, and all Raymond's territories. Hearing this, the holy man made answer . . . with intrepidity of heart, and serene and smiling countenance: 'It was not the Count of Toulouse who made me bishop, nor is it by him I have been established in this city, nor for his sake.[1] . . . I did not come as an intruder, by the violence of an earthly prince, nor will I go out because of him. Let him come himself if he dare; I am ready to welcome his knife, that I may gain eternal glory by the chalice of my passion. He will find me alone and unarmed. I await the prize, and do not fear what man can do unto me.'"

The courageous bishop waited, as he had said, for more than a month, but Raymond did not dare to approach him. At the end of forty days Foulques joined the Crusaders before Lavaur, followed by a large body of Catholics from Toulouse, the "White Confraternity," of which we now hear for the first time as taking an active part in public affairs.

This Confraternity, in the foundation of which it is more than probable St. Dominic's counsel had been specially sought by the Bishop of Toulouse, had been erected by Foulques amongst the Catholic citizens "as a kind of offensive and defensive league, having for its aim the extermination of heresy and usury, which devoured the substance of Catholics, and kept them too often in servitude." The Bishop had given to this Confraternity several standards, solemnly blessed, and as leaders, four well-known Toulousains, two knights and two *bourgeois*. Those who enrolled themselves received the cross and the promise of the Pardon of the Crusade, and took an oath of fidelity to their chiefs, and to the Church. It was a

[1] An allusion to his predecessor, Raymond de Rabastens.

sort of spiritual militia, such as was then sadly needed. To oppose it, the Albigenses had founded a "Black Confraternity"; the two had already come to blows, and the greater part of the city was now in the hands of the Catholics.

Many see in the White Confraternity the beginning of the Third Order of St. Dominic, the "Militia of Jesus Christ," but this, if possible, is by no means certain.[1] It was this body of which 5000 men were now summoned to Lavaur by their Bishop, and Arnauld of Citeaux.

Help from other directions was not wanting. From distant Germany came a large contingent of gallant soldiers headed by Catholic barons, "marching in close ranks, for they were in an enemy's country." A spy who had seen them passing hastened to Toulouse to inform Raymond VI., and that "valiant and enterprising man," Raymond Roger of Foix, who was with him in the city. "When the Count of Foix had heard the spy, immediately, without losing a moment, he sent his men by night to Mont Joyre,[2] in which direction the man had reported the Germans to be marching. Here his men laid an ambuscade in the forest through which the Germans had to pass to reach Lavaur, and the next morning at sunrise . . . the Germans passed by. . . . They had scarcely begun their march when the Count of Foix and his men fell

[1] (*The substance of the following note is communicated by Père Mandonnet, O.P.*) In spite of B. Raymond of Capua's ingenious argument for the Third Order of St. Dominic as being originally the "White Confraternity," or "Militia of Jesus Christ," the evolution cannot be admitted. Bologna claims the honour of being the birthplace of the Third Order—in a very rudimentary and undeveloped form, such as it had in the lifetime of St. Dominic. The first tertiary was B. Diana di Andalo, through whose influence with her wealthy grandfather, Pietro Lovello, the ground close to the Friars' second foundation of St. Nicholas in the Vineyards (at Bologna) was in March 1219 granted to B. Reginald, then Prior of Sta Maria della Mascarella, their first house in Bologna. B. Diana "made profession" to St. Dominic, and lived henceforth almost like a religious in the world. (See *Cartulaire II.* lxxvi. p. 362.) It must of course be remembered that the White Confraternity was actually founded by the Bishop of Toulouse, not by St. Dominic at all, interested as he was in its working. I may add that for these reasons the Third Order is not otherwise mentioned in this book. The growth of the Tertiary body took place sometime after St. Dominic's death, when it was completely reorganised.

[2] A little town now included in the Department of Haute Garonne, about six miles from Rabastens and fourteen from Lavaur.

on them . . . and so smote them that only one escaped; all the others were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners, and the Count of Foix and the country people thereby gained great riches. . . . He who escaped . . . went straight to Lavaur, to tell the Legate and the Count de Montfort the great discomfiture which had fallen upon them."

The succour immediately sent by De Montfort of course arrived too late. He himself headed a strong detachment of soldiers who rode with all speed to the scene of the massacre, only to find the wood strewn with the 6000 dead and wounded. He caused the former to be buried, and brought the wounded tenderly back to Lavaur in country-carts, there to be nursed and cared for, but most of them died. Two other contemporary accounts mention, on the testimony of Foulques of Toulouse who saw the prodigy, that above the site of the carnage—for the Germans were taken utterly unawares, and many were unarmed—rose a tall luminous column like a fiery pillar, which guided the Crusaders to the spot. On arriving, each man was found lying on his back, his arms stretched out in the form of a cross.

It was thus that Raymond Roger of Foix kept the oath which Peter of Aragon had sworn in his name, and to which he had assented, less than three months before, at Narbonne. A priest who was among the German soldiers took refuge in a neighbouring church, hoping that if he were slain it might be at the foot of the altar. But "that evil traitor" Roger Bernard, son of the Count of Foix, followed him, and "approaching him with audacity," asked him what kind of a man he was? "I am a pilgrim and a priest," replied the other. "Show me that you are a priest!" cried the murderer, and when his victim, drawing back his hood, exposed his tonsure, the cruel youth suddenly raised a sharp axe which he carried in his hand, and struck the priest across his shaven crown with such force that he dropped dead where he stood.

These things made the Crusaders burn with anger against their cowardly foes, and an event which took place before Lavaur itself greatly increased this feeling. On the top of

one of the wooden *Castels* which served as engines of attack, the Crusaders had planted a crucifix. Seeing this, the enemy directed all their efforts against the holy standard, "broke an arm therefrom, and suddenly . . . broke out into loud laughter and yells of triumph as if by this stroke they had won a great victory. But He to whom the cross is consecrated . . . caused that these His enemies should be taken on the feast of the Holy Cross, whose injuries were thus vindicated."

It would be useless and tedious to give in detail the recorded events of the siege of Lavaur. It was on May 3, 1211, Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, that the final assault was begun. A breach was made in the wall at last, and, the Crusaders pouring in, the enemy surrendered at discretion. During the attack the Bishop and clergy, among whom almost certainly was St. Dominic, sang "with great devotion *Veni Creator Spiritus* . . . seeing and hearing which the enemy, by the grace of God, were so confounded that they were unable to defend themselves with their full strength; for, as they since confessed, they feared far more the chanting of the priests than the attacks of the soldiers, the psalms than the assaults, the prayers than the blows."

We have only inductive evidence to prove the presence of St. Dominic at the taking of Lavaur, or indeed, with the exception of Muret, upon any other battlefield. But it has been ingeniously, though indirectly, proved[1] that he was at least present a few days later when De Montfort made a large grant of lands to Prouille, whose nuns had of course been praying for his victory. We cannot doubt, says the learned Dominican who advances the argument, that his "ardent supplications were mingled with the appeals to the Holy Spirit" of the other clergy, at the supreme moment.

However this may be, the vengeance taken on the heretic rebels was severe. Some forty of the principal knights were hanged, the loftiest gibbet being reserved for that hardened traitor, Almeric of Montréal. The rest of the ringleaders suffered

[1] By Père Balme, *Cartulaire I.*, pp. 236–7.

death by sword or fire, the women and children being first placed in safe keeping, all but Giraude, the *Châtelaine*, who was punished for her crimes by being thrown into a well which was filled up with stones. The remainder of the people were granted their lives on condition of submission. It is a terrible and tragic story, but not more terrible than the story of all mediæval warfare. These things were taken for granted in the thirteenth century, just as shrapnel and shell are taken for granted in a battle of to-day. But in the case of the Crusade, those who perished might at any time have purchased their lives and safety by submitting to the Church of which they were the baptized children. They took the risks, both temporal and eternal, and with the former at least they were perfectly acquainted. It may be added that in 1220 Raymond of Toulouse repossessed himself of Lavour, and massacred the entire garrison, with the exception of a few men who escaped by swimming down the Agout.

From this tragedy it is almost a relief to turn to the council held at Lavaur two years later, though its history is that of a further step in the downfall of Peter of Aragon.[1] It was at the Feast of the Epiphany, 1213, that this prince, recently returned from the Crusade against the Moors, in which the fortunes of his own kingdom were so closely bound up, and in which he had greatly distinguished himself, informed the Archbishop of Narbonne and Simon de Montfort that he wished to treat with them once more as to the reconciliation of that black sheep, Raymond of Toulouse. Arnauld Almeric bade him put his demands in writing, and bring them sealed to himself, and a council of prelates and clergy, which

[1] It was not the first which had been held within its walls, for in 1168 the Metropolitan of Narbonne had presided over a council of prelates and clergy of the southern provinces; nor was it the last. In 1368 Pierre de la Jugie, whose beautiful tomb of late fourteenth century work can be seen behind the high altar of Narbonne Cathedral, presided as Archbishop over a third assembly of the prelates and clergy of the three provinces of Narbonne, Auch, and Toulouse. This council lasted four days, and passed 133 canons, of which the 131st, curiously enough, is an injunction to all judges and seigneurs to refrain, under pain of excommunication, from constraining those persons already excommunicated to seek for absolution.

he would summon at Lavaur. The King, after "greatly flattering" De Montfort, asked for a week's truce between the conflicting parties, and this was arranged, though Raymond's men took traitorous advantage of it, as was indeed their invariable custom, to pillage and massacre unchecked in the district of Carcassonne.

Peter of Aragon's letter, which was first discussed at the Council, is a curious document. Completely ignoring the crimes and outrages of all his protégés, he begs that four Counts, Raymond of Toulouse, "that devout son of the Church," Raymond Roger of Foix, Bernard VI. of Comminges, and Gaston of Béarn (of whom the last three were his vassals, and for whom he again promises to be surety) be reconciled to the Church, and that their lands be restored to them. This last clause was, of course, the key of the whole matter. The Count of Toulouse, says the King, earnestly desires reconciliation, and is willing to pledge himself to join either the Crusade against the Saracens, or that to the Holy Land—promises which must have astonished even Raymond when they were suggested to him! The writer adds that if it is thought impossible to restore Raymond's territories to the Count in person, his son, at least, may not be cut off from succession, but placed "under diligent guard and faithful surveillance in honour of the Holy Roman Church, until he has given evidence of a good, generous nature by manifest signs."

The letter, which, for cool assurance—one might use a stronger term—can scarcely be surpassed, concludes with a hope that all four nobles, restored to their territories, may with Simon de Montfort be soon engaged "in the affairs of Christianity in the country of Spain, for the honour of God, and the glory of our Holy Mother the Church."

The Council which considered these propositions was composed not only of the Legates and St. Dominic (who at its close was appointed administrator of Carcassonne by its Bishop), but of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, the Bishops of Toulouse, Albi, and Comminges, besides many other prelates and

abbots. The King of Aragon and Raymond of Toulouse both appeared in person, and the debates were conducted partly in writing and partly *viva voce*.

The King can scarcely have supposed that his demands in respect of the four Counts would have been granted, but it suited him to retain the position of mediator, and it is only too apparent that he wished to force the hand of the Archbishop of Narbonne. The whole letter was dictated by the fear of seeing De Montfort lord paramount of the Midi, on which Peter had his own designs—a fact clearly evident in the pious aspiration that the leader of the Crusade might speedily turn his arms against the Saracens. The King had staked much on this appeal—his royal honour, his influence with the Legates and the Pope, and his worldly ambition. It was the last desperate move in the game he was playing. If it failed, there was nothing left but to sweep the pieces from the board, and begin another—that of open defiance. We cannot doubt that he realised to the full all the issues this involved, but his Spanish pride was roused; he was prepared to risk everything rather than ultimate defeat.

To his letter an immediate answer was returned from the Council of Lavaur. The Legates congratulate him on being, as he says, so devout a son of the Church, and remind him of the singular benefits he owes personally to the Holy Father. They then go in detail into the question of the four Counts. In each case it is the same: will they submit? If they will, forgiveness and restitution of their confiscated lands is promised. But the submission must be full and unconditional.

Finally, the King himself is reminded that in making himself the champion of the four excommunicated barons his own orthodoxy may fall under suspicion. He must rest assured that nothing can be done for any of them so long as they persist in heresy and rebellion, and he must take heed to himself. If he is not satisfied with this answer, the whole matter will be referred to the Lord Pope.

The King's first act on receiving this letter was to beg

a truce till Pentecost, or at least Easter; but, aware that if it was known in the country that the Crusade was suspended, there would be a general falling-off of reinforcements—knowing too the manner in which Raymond VI. habitually observed such "truces," this was denied him.

Thwarted in all his demands, the temper of the King of Aragon could brook no further refusals. He took the final step—it was so simple that one scarcely realises in reading of it all that it involved—and declared that he henceforth took the heretic lords under his own protection. Thereupon the Archbishop of Narbonne wrote him a short letter, which would have melted the heart of a humbler man—a letter full of dignified sorrow and reproof, begging him to reflect before he finally committed himself, and incurred the stain of anathema, and warning him that, if he persisted, and left his men in defence of strongholds belonging to the rebels, he would be, *de facto*, excommunicated. The Legate was evidently thinking of the Castle of Foix.

This letter, as might be expected, was fruitless. In a conflict of wills and authority the King of Aragon was not going to yield to a Cistercian monk, even were he Archbishop of Narbonne. There was just a chance that if he succeeded in reaching the Pope before the arrival of the delegates from the Council, and making his own representations, he might gain his cause. He took it with such triumphant success that Innocent III. promptly ordered De Montfort to restore immediately all the conquered lands of Béarn, Comminges, and Foix, further declaring that the Countship of Toulouse should be kept in trust for the heir, Raymond's son; the Count himself being ready to accept the penance the Pope imposed on him—*i.e.* a Crusade to Spain or the Holy Land. The King of Aragon had bitterly complained, says the Holy Father, that during his own absence in Spain De Montfort had made war on his subjects,[1] who were, by his account, loyal Catholics. This ought not to have been done, and the King, who was

[1] The Counts of Foix, Comminges, and Béarn.

now preparing for a further campaign, begged an injunction from the Pope restraining De Montfort from any further attacks on his territories—a command which Innocent bids De Montfort to respect.

To the Archbishop of Narbonne the Pope wrote almost reproachfully. Reminding him of the Spanish Crusade, and of the continual danger from the Moors, he adds that the forces of Christendom must no longer be divided. The Legate must now cease from preaching the Albigensian Crusade; Languedoc must be pacified; the Crusaders should rather fight the Saracens in Spain than the heretics in France.[1]

Truly Peter of Aragon had played his game well! Before, however, these letters had reached their destination the delegates from Lavaur arrived at Rome, where, though at first they found the Pope "a little hard," being deceived by the false suggestions of the King of Aragon, the tables were soon turned. The letter of the Council submitted to the Holy Father, containing a complete vindication of De Montfort from the charges brought against him, a comprehensive explanation of the Legate's own action, and also that of King Peter, and an outline of the conduct of the nobles in question, put matters in another light. Innocent III. lost no time in writing to the King of Aragon a letter which, for wide generosity and true fatherly kindness can scarcely be equalled, but in which he plainly points out his errors and his duty in severe and unmistakable terms. He rebukes him sternly for having by false representations induced him, Pope Innocent, to write the recent letters to the Archbishop and De Montfort, letters which he now entirely revokes, being better informed. He places the King's conduct as regards the heretic nobles in its true light, and

[1] *Cf.* the Pope's own words in the proclamation of the Albigensian Crusade, p. 137, when he declares the heretics are more dangerous than the Saracens. He was in a most difficult position, continually called upon to give decisions in cases of which the facts had been grossly misrepresented. Well may a modern anti-Catholic writer say: "Innocent III. was badly informed, badly obeyed."

adds that if Raymond sincerely wishes to return to the fold, if the ban of excommunication is indeed to be taken from Toulouse, the proper person to charge himself with the matter is Foulques, its bishop; that upon information received from him the Pope will send a Legate *a latere* to effect the reconciliation, "a man who shall look neither to right nor left." The letter concludes by a solemn and touching warning that if the King persists in his present course he is incurring a terrible danger, "and more than that, the wrath of God, which you will inevitably draw down upon yourself by such conduct. Moreover, although we have for you much affection, we cannot spare you, or use deference towards you in matters touching the Catholic Faith; and the danger you incur in opposing God and His Church . . . you may learn not only from ancient examples, but from those that are still recent."

So ends the letter from the Court of final appeal, in May, 1213. Two months before, while his envoys were yet in Rome, St. Dominic at Carcassonne had predicted the death of the King. Peter of Aragon had had every chance, and had lost them all. It was but a short step from falsehood and conspiracy to open defiance, and in the four short months which yet remained to the man whose eyes were blinded by pride and ambition, we see him descending the final degrees until he vanishes into the darkness at Muret.

Lavaur fades into the distance as the train rattles over the plain towards Castres in the pale blue radiance of a lovely autumn morning. The tender colouring of earth and sky meet and mingle on the horizon. Long after the town has become a mere indistinct blurred line of low roofs, the grand old Cathedral of St. Alain towers above the flats standing sentinel beside the river. But as at Béziers, even to-day at Lavaur the place is full of terrible memories, ghosts of the past, that not even brilliant sunshine can hide, or perfect colouring blot out.

And of all the memories which haunt Lavaur the most

terrible is not that of its cruel sieges, not of the high gibbet on which forty men were hanged, not of the stone-filled well . . . It is the tragedy of a soul which here made its final choice between good and evil, and knowingly, wilfully, deliberately, chose the evil and fell from grace.

XVI

THE ARMING OF A KNIGHT AT CASTELNAUDARY

Castelnaudary, a picturesque little place on the main-line between Toulouse and Narbonne, about ten miles from Prouille and twenty-three from Carcassonne, is, like Narbonne, a town which will prove extremely disappointing to the Dominican pilgrim. Its historical associations with St. Dominic are numerous and interesting; it is one of the places through which he must most frequently have passed on his way to Toulouse and to the Albi district, but of his traces to-day scarcely anything remains. The streets and general plan of the town are of course much the same, but the existing parish church of St. Michael only dates from the fourteenth century, and the ruins of the grand old castle have been rebuilt into a prison.

The town itself, the ancient Gallo-Roman *Sosto-magus*, was almost destroyed by the Visigoths in the fifth century. Under the Carlovingian kings it was rebuilt and fortified, receiving the name of *Castellum Novum Arrii*, whence the modern Castelnaudary. In the thirteenth century the place belonged to the Countship of Toulouse, and here Raymond VI., immediately after the taking of Lavaur, May 1211, set fire to and destroyed a great part of the castle, which he left deserted in anticipation of De Montfort's arrival.[1] The Crusaders, however, following close upon his heels, rebuilt the ruins, and fortified the town hastily, but strongly. De Montfort then retired to Carcassonne, doubtless to spend a few days with St. Dominic, and to see for the first time the baby daughter,

[1] Open hostilities against Raymond VI. were begun on May 22, 1211.

baptized by the Saint, who had been born to him in February 1211. The little Petronilla was now with her nurse in the castle of Montréal.

After this short breathing-space, during which six strong castles in the Albigeois had surrendered, De Montfort led his men (June, 1211) against Toulouse itself, but this first siege was unsuccessful, and he was compelled to abandon it. Raymond VI., who was in the city with the Count of Comminges, was, curiously enough, engaged in constructing the new nave of the Cathedral of St. Stephen, and compelled the workmen by main force to continue their task, though, as the Cathedral adjoined the ramparts, they were in great danger of their lives from stray arrows and other missiles. Raymond had bestowed Toulouse upon his fifth wife, Eleanor of Aragon, as a wedding gift, in order, says Puy Laurens, grimly, that he might have "a plausible pretext for defending it."

It was on June 20, while the Crusaders were yet before the walls, while St. Dominic, with a number of ecclesiastical dignitaries, was by the side of De Montfort, that the Bishop of Cahors, who had been present at the siege of Béziers, in which his father had taken part, came to beg the great General to accept the suzerainty of his diocese, which Raymond had now openly forfeited. It is plain that the time and place had been specially chosen. Raymond himself, from the heights of the Château Narbonnais, the principal fort of Toulouse, could follow the progress of the splendid ceremonies which took place in the besiegers' camp, when the Bishop of Cahors, placing his hands between those of De Montfort, swore fidelity to him, not on the Holy Gospel, but on his sacerdotal word,[1] for the fief of Cahors, which he now received for the second time, it having previously been bestowed upon him in 1208 by "the former Count of Toulouse." All the prelates and barons present signed the deed which constituted De Montfort sovereign lord of

[1] A king took an oath *in verbo Regis;* a bishop *in verbo sacerdotis, seu veritatis.*

Cahors, and their names lend the final touch of interest to the proceedings. The Archbishop of Narbonne, the Bishops of Uzès and Toulouse, the Abbot of Pamiers, and Maître Thédise, Canon of Genoa, the recently appointed coadjutor of the Legates, head the illustrious list; and after their names are those of five nobles of the Ile-de-France. At the end follow the signatures of three humble religious, a Benedictine and a Cistercian monk and, last of all, that of "Brother Dominic, Preacher."[1]

A beautiful story, referring to a miracle of St. Dominic, which took place at this time, may be narrated here in its chronological order, though properly it belongs to the story of Toulouse. "On a certain day, when the Saint was praying in the [Benedictine] Church of St. Antoninus[2] [without the walls], a number of English pilgrims on their way to the shrine of St. James of Compostella, wishing to avoid the town, which was then placed under an interdict, had entered a small boat to cross the Garonne. The bark began to sink under their weight, for they were forty in number, but at their cries, and those of the Crusaders, Blessed Dominic hurried from the church where he was praying, and seeing the danger of the pilgrims, he threw himself upon the ground, face downwards, shedding bitter tears, his arms stretched out like a cross, invoking Almighty God, and begging Him with pious confidence to deliver these men from death. His prayer finished, Dominic arose full of hope, and turning to the river he cried to the pilgrims, who were already sinking: 'I order you all in the name of Christ to gain the bank.' At once the drowning men, in the sight of the whole army, and of a large number of spectators, rose to the surface of the water and remained there, as if on firm ground, each in the place to which the current had drawn him. Those on the banks stretched out pikes and lance-shafts, clasping which the pilgrims were all drawn safe and sound to land." This story is related by Gérard de Frachet, to whose testimony is added

[1] It is interesting to note that the Cistercian witness, Almeric of Solignac, lived to celebrate the Feast of St. Dominic, whom he had deeply venerated and loved, and to whose memory he had the greatest devotion.

[2] St. Antoninus, first Abbot of Pamiers.

that of an eye-witness, a nobleman from Cahors in the suite of his Bishop, who declares his willingness to affirm the miracle on oath.

It was at Carcassonne, after the abandonment of the siege of Toulouse, that De Montfort heard that Raymond VI. was advancing with a strong force against Castelnaudary. His wife, Countess Alix, was at Lavaur; his eldest son, Amaury, ill at Fanjeaux, when the evil tidings reached him during the vintage season of 1211. Without losing a moment, the brave man, who had not a thought but for the cause for which he fought, prepared to set out with all his available men for Castelnaudary. St. Dominic possibly accompanied him, for he was not at that time in charge of the diocese of Carcassonne, though we have no proof of his presence during the siege. Immediately before De Montfort's departure, "on a certain Sunday . . . after he had heard Mass and received Holy Communion . . . a Cistercian lay-brother who was present, began to console and encourage him by every means in his power. To which the noble Count, relying entirely upon God, made answer: 'Think you that I am afraid? The whole Church is praying for us! I know we shall not be conquered.'"

Yet it was but a small force which he could muster to defend Castelnaudary, whose castle is built at the end of a ridge, both sides of which are steep. Scarcely were he and his men safely within the walls when the enemy arrived, and proceeded to fortify their camp so strongly that it seemed, say two old chroniclers, as if they were rather the besieged than the besiegers. It was not long before Gui de Lucé, at the head of fifty knights, who had been sent by De Montfort to join the King of Aragon's much talked-of expedition against the Saracens, rejoined him within the castle. The King, it appeared, had shown himself "greatly uncivil" to this reinforcement, even going the length of lying in wait to exterminate it! The knights had judged it better to return whither they were really needed, while there was yet a possibility of doing so.

The siege was long and tedious. Daily sorties were made by De Montfort against the camp, which the enemy fortified every day more strongly, but no special advantage was gained on either side. The Toulousains did not dare to attempt a battle, and contented themselves with doing all the harm they could behind their entrenchments. Raymond, however, had prepared a great "engine" for throwing stones, with which he hoped speedily to demolish the castle walls, but "after this had played for a good space of time a certain jester of the Count of Toulouse came to him and said: 'Why do you spend so much money and time on that machine? why take so much trouble to throw down the walls of Castelnaudary? Can you not see that the enemy already approaches our camp daily, while you dare not stir outside it? You ought to wish their walls were made of iron, so that they might never be able to get outside them!'" This view seems to have struck the Crusaders, who continually inquired of the Toulousains why they took so much trouble to damage the ramparts when for twenty *marques*[1] they—the besieged—would gladly level 20 feet of the wall so that the enemy should pass within, where, added the scoffers, they would be warmly welcomed.

This course, however, not commending itself to Raymond VI., matters might have continued as they were indefinitely had not De Montfort sent to Lavaur for reinforcements. The Count of Foix, whose special genius seemed to lie in the planning of ambuscades, got wind of this, and, without consulting Count Raymond, hurried off with a strong force to lie in wait for the expected contingent, which was headed by De Montfort's brother-in-law, Bouchard de Marly. The ambush was spied, and De Marly was warned, but knowing it was too late to retreat, for they were almost within the jaws of the trap, with splendid heroism he commanded his men (who had all that morning confessed and heard Mass in the castle-chapel of Saissac, of which he was now the lord) to close up their ranks and push forward. The Count of Foix, seeing he

[1] About sixty francs.

was discovered, lost not a moment in falling upon the little band, which his own men outnumbered by about six to one. One of the knights from Lavaur, losing his self-control, rushed from the *mêlée* shouting, "We are all dead men!" but was forced by the Bishop of Cahors, who had accompanied the contingent, to return into the thick of the fight.

In the midst of the desperate struggle reinforcements were brought to the brigand Count by his son, Bernard Roger, and matters would have turned out very badly for the Crusaders had not De Montfort himself issued from Castelnaudary with a strong force, and almost, it would seem, by the terror of his very name and presence, swept the assailants from the field. They were compelled to retire to their fortified camp, where the Count of Toulouse, whose tactics were of another kind, impatiently awaited them. De Montfort, being further strengthened by fresh detachments from Castres and Cahors, was now in a better position to defend the stronghold.

On his return from this brilliant sortie, "knowing that all courage comes from God, and all victory from Heaven," De Montfort sprang from his horse at the entrance to the town, and "walked barefoot to the church[1] to render thanks to the Almighty for His great benefits; and there our soldiers sang with great devotion and enthusiasm *Te Deum Laudamus*, blessing thus the Lord of Mercy, and bearing witness to Him who had done so great things for His people, and had caused them to triumph over their enemies."

It was not long, however, before news was brought to De Montfort that the six important castles which had recently surrendered had just seceded to the Count of Toulouse, owing to a report spread by the indefatigable Count of Foix that he, De Montfort, was dead, having been taken prisoner, flayed alive, and finally hanged! He decided to go in person to Narbonne and Béziers to seek reinforcements, but during his absence in the South the Count of Toulouse, "seeing that the siege advanced in nothing," which under the circum-

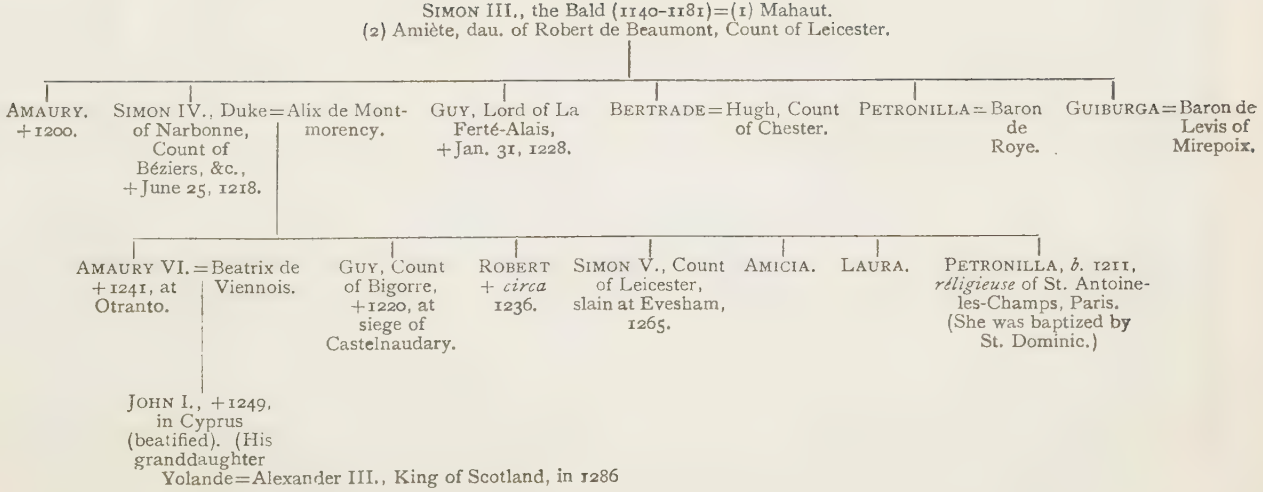
[1] The churches of Castelnaudary had been transformed into Manichæan emples. It is probable that the castle-chapel is here indicated.

stances was scarcely to be wondered at, decided to abandon it, burnt the "engines," filled up the trenches, and retired with as little ado as possible. "They did not dare," says Vaux-Cernay, "to leave their fortifications until they knew that our Count was no longer in Castelnaudary." The greatest loss inflicted on the Crusaders was that of seven castles in the diocese of Albi and eight in that of Toulouse, which had yielded in consequence of the lie propagated by Raymond Roger of Foix. At one of these, the Château de Graves, a singularly foul act of treason took place. A French knight, placed in command by De Montfort, had hired a carpenter to mend the huge casks which held the year's supply of wine for the castle—it will be remembered this was the time of vintage. The man, having finished the first, requested his master to look inside and see if it was well done. No sooner had the knight stooped to look within than the carpenter, raising his axe, struck off his head at a blow.

Such acts as these could never be attributed to the Crusaders, who, whatever their faults, at least slew their enemies in fair and open warfare. From Castelnaudary De Montfort withdrew to Pamiers, where he received a message from the amiable Count of Foix that if he would remain there four days he would come and beat him. De Montfort remained there for more than a week, but the Count of Foix, having doubtless changed his mind, did not appear.

It would be interesting to trace the fortunes of De Montfort during the next two years, until the battle of Muret, but we are occupied with him only incidentally. He was cheered and encouraged in the winter of 1211–12 by the definite and official attachment to the Crusade of the Bishops of Toulouse and Carcassonne; and at Christmas-time, 1211, by the return of his brother Guy[1] from the Holy Land, where they had

[1] An abridged genealogical table of the family of De Montfort will show the relationship of the members of this illustrious family. That here given is adapted from the *Cartulaire III.*, p. 348.


Simon III., the Bald (1140-1181)=(1) Mahaut.
(2) Amiète, dau. of Robert de Beaumont, Count of Leicester.
Amaury. +1200.
Simon IV., Duke of Narbonne, Count of Béziers, &c., +June 25, 1218.
=Alix de Montmorency.
Guy, Lord of La Ferté-Alais, +Jan. 31, 1228.
Bertrade=Hugh, Count of Chester.
Petronilla=Baron de Roye.
Guiburga=Baron de Levis of Mirepoix.
Amaury VI. +1241, at Otranto.
=Beatrix de Viennois.
Guy, Count of Bigorre, +1220, at siege of Castelnaudary.
Robert + circa 1236.
Simon V., Count of Leicester, slain at Evesham, 1265.
Amicia.
Laura.
Petronilla, b. 1211, religieuse of St. Antoine-les-Champs, Paris. (She was baptized by St. Dominic.)
John I., +1249, in Cyprus (beatified). (His granddaughter
Yolande=Alexander III., King of Scotland, in 1286

fought side by side at Jerusalem; where the latter had married and settled; and whence he had come to join for a time the elder brother, the fame of whose deeds had reached him in far-off Palestine. They met at the castle of Castres, where it is probable St. Dominic joined them.

The Saint's whole energies during the year 1212, after the Council of Narbonne and the departure of the Spanish Crusade, seem to have been occupied by the necessity of providing for Prouille. We find him in one place after another, here thankfully accepting the gift of valuable lands for his beloved foundation, there buying a field or vineyard in the name of the convent, the position and price of which rendered its acquisition possible and desirable. Simon de Montfort and the Bishops of Toulouse and Carcassonne were his unfailing protectors and helpers, and De Montfort signalised most of his victories by a thank-offering of lands to Prouille. At least two learned writers [1] have thought that St. Dominic was present at the long and difficult sieges of Penne d'Agen and Moissac, the former a strongly fortified town upon the Lot, which was only reduced after a siege of two months (May—July, 1212). But as this supposition is pure conjecture—as it cannot be proved even indirectly [2] that St. Dominic did accompany the Crusading army upon this expedition—it will not be necessary to describe either place, nor (in detail) the events which took place there. As regard Moissac we are reduced to simple conjecture; there is no word even of indirect evidence to prove his presence there. What is practically certain is that the reinforcements, which Bishop Guy de Vaux-Cernay and the intrepid Countess de Montfort were bringing from Carcassonne to Penne d'Agen, passed by

[1] Père Balme, O.P., and M. Jean Guiraud.

[2] The whole evidence for the presence of St. Dominic at Penne d'Agen rests upon three words, "*ad quos presentes*," in a deed of gift by which Robert de Mauvoisin made over to Prouille, during the siege of Penne, a rich gift of land which had just been bestowed upon him by De Montfort. The Saint's name is not even mentioned, and though he may (as Père Balme asserts) have been present for a few days, we cannot consider Penne d'Agen, which, with Moissac, was close to the borders of Guienne, as being in "St. Dominic's Country."

Prouille, where St. Dominic then was. It was in June 1212, and the heat was so great and many of the "pilgrims" so weary that the Bishop made them in turn ride pillion behind him, an example imitated by the Countess. Sometimes both Countess and Bishop walked, while worn-out men rode their horses. It is this contingent which Père Balme considers St. Dominic accompanied to Penne d'Agen, where a large assembly of prelates and clergy was already with De Montfort. As at Lavaur — as was indeed their universal custom—they sang before the final attack *Veni Creator Spiritus*, barefooted, clad in albs, repeating twice the strophe *Hostem repellas longius*. At Moissac, the enemy, terrified at the sound, abandoning the walls, beat a hasty retreat into the town, which shortly afterwards surrendered, on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lady, 1212.

Before returning to Castelnaudary to describe its second siege, and the chief event connecting it with the life of St. Dominic, one most important fact must be recorded. This was the taking of Muret, a strong castle situated on the Garonne, about three leagues south of Toulouse. The capture was one of De Montfort's most brilliant feats of arms. It was after this loss that Raymond VI. piteously appealed for help to the King of Aragon, an appeal which resulted in the calling of the Council of Lavaur.

In 1220, two years after Simon de Montfort's death, Castelnaudary surrendered to the Count of Toulouse, and Amaury, the great General's eldest son, lost no time in attacking it. During the siege his second brother, Guy, Count of Bigorre, was mortally wounded, and, though Castelnaudary was invested until the winter, Amaury was unable to reduce it. The place must have been full of memories for him, for it was here that one of the most important events of his life had taken place.

It was at the beginning of June 1213, that St. Dominic, then administrator of the diocese, met Simon de Montfort and his principal officers at Carcassonne, where an important con-

sultation was held. It was becoming evident that a decisive blow must be struck at a greater than Raymond of Toulouse, and before this was done De Montfort was desirous of having his son Amaury armed as a knight by Holy Church. It was his friend Dominic whose advice he sought as to the time and place of the ceremony. To be armed a knight was, in the Middle Ages, a most significant event in the life of a young man.

"Such knights," says Vincent de Beauvais, "swear . . . that they will nobly perform all that their prince shall ordain; that they will never give up this high dignity, nor refuse death for the common profit. . . . And the knight, as he has a working name (*nom de travail*), so also has he a name of honour. None takes this honour to himself but he who is called by God. . . . It belongs to him duly to observe the rules of chivalry, to defend the Church, to vanquish treachery, to honour courage, to preserve the poor from injury, to bring peace to the earth." For this reason "the solemn custom is that each, when he receives the girdle of knighthood, goes solemnly to the church and offers his sword upon the altar, as if making there a solemn profession and vowing himself to the service of the sanctuary. There he faithfully promises to God the service of his sword for the Church, and not against it; for [such knights] make no less solemn profession than do bishops and abbots. . . . And in some places it is the custom that when a knight is to be consecrated he watches all the night before, in prayer in the church, and has licence neither to lie nor sit . . . but must pray all night, standing or kneeling."

The place chosen for this solemn consecration of the young soldier was Castelnaudary, and the day was fixed for the Feast of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 1213. The Bishops of Toulouse and Carcassonne being still absent, De Montfort had begged the Bishop of Orléans to perform the ceremony. From all parts of the country flocked nobles and knights *ad festivitatem novæ militiæ*. De Montfort's brother Guy left the stronghold he was besieging in the Albigeois, and hastened to

Castelnaudary, whose castle, twice ruined within two years, was unable to accommodate so great a number of guests. Great tents were pitched on the rich plain at the foot of the castle rock, where two years before so many brave men had fought and died. The ceremony doubtless took place in the chapel of the castle. "On the day of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the . . . Bishop of Orléans vests for Holy Mass. Knights surround the altar; at the Offertory the celebrant turns to those already assembled. Count Simon, holding his first-born son by his right hand, while the boy's left is held by his mother the Countess, approaches the altar to offer him to God, praying the prelate to arm him a knight for the service of the Lord. Then the brother-bishops of Orléans and Auxerre, kneeling at the foot of the altar, intone, with unspeakable devotion, the *Veni Creator*, and gird the youth with the girdle of chivalry. It is thus that Amaury de Montfort was armed a knight."

To this solemn and beautiful scene, at which St. Dominic was officially present as representative of the Bishop of Carcassonne, it is a relief to turn after the horrors of warfare, the excommunications, the continual treacheries, the unspeakable cruelties and licence which form the dark side of the "altogether joyous thirteenth century." It is of the pageant of white tents filled with armed knights, of the war-worn nobles crowding to watch the consecration of their hero's son, of St. Dominic praying for his friends, of the joy of the heroic father and mother, of the chivalrous eagerness of the young knight that one would choose to think of at Castelnaudary today, rather than of the ambuscades of the Count of Foix, of his perfidy and lies, of the trenches in which lay the dead body of Guy de Montfort. Scarcely anything is left of the original fabric of the castle, whose huge walls have been rebuilt into prison cells.

It was with some difficulty I obtained a permit to go through the prison, but I succeeded at last, after many delays. The official who was my guide was an extremely civil, intelligent

man who knew something of the history of the place, and was well acquainted with Simon de Montfort—who is not, in St. Dominic's country? He was able to point out exactly the very small part of the building which once belonged to the old castle. A wall or two, a cell, a hall transformed into a dormitory, a broken arch, a single low tower—this is all that is left to-day of the stronghold of Castelnaudary, which was destroyed in 1647. In the courtyard were half a dozen prisoners, sitting in the sun, who seemed astounded at the apparition of a visitor, and comically anxious to avoid recognition!

"This is the chapel,"[1] said the warder, "where Mass was formerly said. The prisoners heard it through this *grille*."

It was a small, square stone cell. On the right was the heavy iron *grille* in the wall, now closed and locked. Opposite the entrance was the altar.

"And is Mass never said here now?"

"Never, madame."

The altar, of Renaissance design and no special beauty, was draped in mouldering hangings, piteous with dust and neglect. But on each side of the empty tabernacle, in tiny niches, stood a statuette, of workmanship so exquisite that I cried out in wonder. Both were of painted and gilded wood, about fifteen inches high, evidently the work of an artist. On the right hand stood St. Joseph, and opposite him, in habit, scapular, and *cappa*, with the expression that Fra Angelico alone has painted, was St. Dominic, with the face of an angel.

It was Government property, said the warder; only the Government had the right to sell it. But who had placed it there?

On the opposite wall, facing the altar, was a curious piece of wood, perhaps eight inches square, not unlike a Russian *icon*, carved in slight relief with worn and indistinct figures,

[1] The chapel is part of the modern building.

almost black with age and neglect, but evidently once richly painted. Round the blackened edge of what had once been the frame a few words of an ancient inscription were still legible:

"*Honi soit . . . Sauveur de Muret.*"

It was an ancient *ex-voto* of the great battle. Neither saint nor soldier are yet forgotten at Castelnaudary!

XVII

THE FIELD OF MURET

In a certain sense, no event in the history of the world can be said to be final and pivotal, except the Supreme Event of the Incarnation, with all that results from it. We cannot draw a line across the page of a nation's history, and say: "After this tremendous catastrophe all was changed." The "decisive" battles of the world, Thermopylæ, Lepanto, Waterloo, were not final as regards the countries defeated; though decisive in a relative sense they were not so absolutely. The Persian kingdom yet exists; the question of Turkey is still one of the most difficult problems of international politics; France to-day is one of the great Powers. Nor can the historian abandon his *dramatis personæ* at the most thrilling and critical moment of their lives, leaving the rest to the imagination of his readers, as can the novelist. The history of the world has a trick of repeating itself; neither good nor evil has things entirely its own way; nothing but the unexpected and awful cataclysms of Nature are more than relatively final. And last—and this is the real tragedy of history as of life—there is always an anticlimax.

If it were possible to dramatise the story of the Crusade, the first act would open with St. Dominic's appearance at the Conference of Castelnau, and the second would deal with the Foundation of Prouille. There would be magnificent scenes between the hero, Simon de Montfort, the villain, Raymond of Toulouse, and the arch-traitor, Peter of Aragon. We should see the Cistercian martyr dying by the broad waters of the Rhone, the stern Legate excommunicating the murderer, the Proclamation of the Crusade, the sieges, the Councils, the

plots; the whole tragedy deepening and darkening as the enemy seemed to triumph and the Crusaders to lose courage, until the glorious victory of Muret, gained by a few hundred Catholic soldiers, broke for ever the power of the heresy and loosened its hold on the hearts of the people. The last scene would show us De Montfort invested with all the dignities forfeited by the rebel nobles, ruling triumphantly over the Midi from the Garonne to the Rhone, and living happily ever afterwards.

All the dramatic unities demanded that Muret should close the Crusade in a final blaze of glory. Yet the war dragged on slowly and painfully for years afterwards, marked by such terrible events as the Siege of Toulouse in 1218, in which De Montfort lost his life, until in 1229, in the reign of St. Louis, it was officially ended—not by another great victory, but by the Treaty of Paris.

Nevertheless, in spite of the inevitable anticlimax, the battle of Muret was one of the most notable victories ever gained by a handful of Catholic heroes against the enemies of the Church and nation. It produced an electrical moral effect. Had the battle been lost, the cause would have been lost also, at any rate temporarily. It so broke the power of the apostate barons that De Montfort's heavy task was greatly lightened. We may go further, and say that of all the battles fought upon her soil it is this of which Catholic France has the greatest reason to be proud, for it was the result of a sublime act of Faith by one of the noblest of her sons. Muret was the foreshadowing of Lepanto.

After the Council of Lavaur in January 1213, the continuance of the Crusade had seemed for a time to be threatened. The enemy was openly, though rather prematurely, triumphing; the Crusaders, perplexed and disappointed, had many of them returned home. News travelled slowly in those days, and the journey to Rome was long and painful. The delegates sent by the Council to lay the facts of the case before Pope Innocent, and to explain the misrepresentations of Peter of

Aragon, arrived too late to forestall the rebukes addressed to the Legates and De Montfort, and the despatch of yet another Legate, Robert de Courçon, an Englishman, who was commissioned actively to preach throughout the Midi a new Crusade to the Holy Land, that against the Albigenses being now declared closed. For some weeks men knew not what to think, and the whole country was in a turmoil. The spiritual leaders of the Crusade, including St. Dominic, waited with patience and courage, firm in the faith that right should prevail, but De Montfort was placed in a most difficult position. The news had spread throughout the country that Peter of Aragon was assembling a great army to crush his rival. In fact, he was openly declaring hostilities, and on one occasion Amaury, the newly armed knight, narrowly escaped capture. The King of Aragon openly boasted of being under the Pope's protection, and of acting on his commands, and the Legates were temporarily silenced. However, on receipt of the final letter, brought to him by two Cistercian abbots, in which Pope Innocent so sternly rebuked the traitor, the face of affairs was speedily changed. The King, still professing obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff, crossed the frontier, and marched with a large army direct to Toulouse to join Count Raymond and his friends, while the Crusade against the Albigenses was, by Innocent's command, preached with renewed vigour.

De Montfort was at Fanjeaux when, on 10th September 1213, the King of Aragon, with the Counts of Toulouse, Comminges, and Foix, laid siege to the Castle of Muret, about four leagues from Toulouse. The news was immediately carried to De Montfort, who, having guessed the designs of the enemy, had started for Muret on the previous day, and was hurrying to the assistance of the handful of men who were holding the citadel against the vast army of the besiegers. He was accompanied by St. Dominic[1] and a number of prelates and religious, and the little band halted at noon next

[1] The sole (reliable) authority for St. Dominic's presence at Muret is Bernard Gui. This historian, however, is absolutely trustworthy.

day, 10th September, at the Cistercian Abbey of Boulbonne, whither they had made a *détour* from the direct road leading through Pamiers and Saverdun. Here De Montfort entered the church, where he remained for some time in prayer. Then, drawing his sword and placing it on the altar, he cried: "O good sweet Jesus Christ, you have chosen me, unworthy as I am, as your champion. To-day, since I go to fight your battles, I take this sword from your altar, that I may have the grace to fight with honour and justice."

They pushed on in the heat of the afternoon along the banks of the Ariège, meeting the messengers from Muret about half-way to Saverdun, which place they reached at nightfall. Here a council of war was held. De Montfort was extremely anxious to press on at once to Muret, whose small garrison he knew was ill-provisioned; but the priests present urged upon him the weariness of his own men, exhausted by a two-days' march, and he yielded.

Next day, Wednesday, 11th September, De Montfort rose before daybreak, made his confession, handed his will to his chaplain, directing him to send it to Rome for confirmation by the Pope in case of his death, and then with all his men went out at dawn to the monastery church, where one of the Bishops in his company sang Mass of Our Lady, the day being within the Octave of her Nativity. During the ceremonies the Bishops again excommunicated by name the Counts of Toulouse, Foix, and Comminges, the rebel Toulousains and their defenders and helpers, without, however, naming the King of Aragon. Even to the last there seems to have been a hope that he would return before it was too late. The Bishop of Toulouse sent off a mounted messenger to the King, now encamped outside Muret, requesting a safe-conduct for himself and his brother prelates, who were anxious for an audience to treat of peace. The little army then continued its march, and had reached Hauterive, some ten miles on the journey, when the express messenger returned from Peter of Aragon with a curt refusal of everything demanded. A little further on the road crosses the Lèze, a tributary of the Ariège,

about half-way between Hauterive on the latter river and Muret on the Garonne. Marshy country crossed by brooks swelled by recent rains made advance very difficult, and had the enemy but known it the whole force could have been annihilated here. Rain was falling in torrents as the men, drenched and weary, took refuge in a little wayside church, into which their leader had entered to pray; but the shower passing, they were soon on the road again, and an hour or two later stood on the right bank of the Garonne, just opposite the Castle of Muret, whose red ramparts dominated the river.

There were only thirty men in the Castle of Muret. Simon de Montfort had only been able to bring thirty more with him. "But it is true," writes a modern critic,[1] "that if the garrison of Muret was slender the knights who came to its rescue were a body of picked men. Their spirit was excellent, their moral character perfect, their union solid. They desired martyrdom rather than victory, whilst their adversaries only felt for each other distrust or envy."

The Toulousains had lost no time in attacking Muret.[2] "Scarcely had the allied troops arrived beneath the walls than [the leaders] met in council . . . and finally decided to storm the place. The walls of the new town were low and weak, and surrounded by a narrow shallow ditch, while the citadel, protected by a deep ravine, [at the bottom of which ran the] Louge, was impregnable, and its defences were most formidable. Unanimously an angle of the new ramparts facing the camp was chosen as the point of attack. The order was immediately given to the Toulousain army to cross the Louge, to invest the wall round the Toulouse Gate,[3] and to attack it from all sides." This was done with the assistance of six *mangonneaux*, and the gate giving way, the defenders were obliged to withdraw into the citadel. The assailants rushed

[1] M. Marcel Dieulafoy, *La Bataille de Muret*, p. [109], 19.
[2] This account of the battle is compiled *verbatim* from contemporary chronicles in the article above cited.
[3] See sketch-map, p. 213.

in, and prepared to improve their position. But suddenly the news spread that Count Simon was approaching, and soon after the Toulousains were ordered to abandon the siege, to evacuate the quarters already occupied, and to withdraw to their entrenchments.

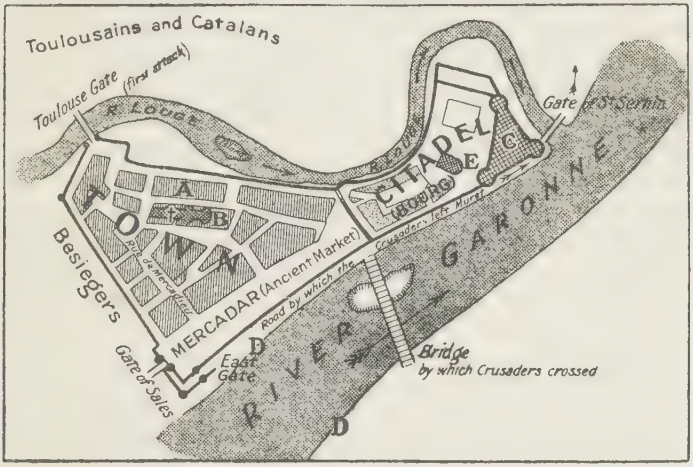
"Scarcely had they retired when the French knights, led by Simon . . . appeared upon the right bank of the Garonne. All on horseback, surrounding the banner of the Count, they descended to the river, which reflected the brilliance of the swords and helms like a sheet of crystal. . . . Never were seen so many good vassals in so small a number of men! Whilst a portion of the garrison went to welcome them, the besiegers . . . counted the knights of De Montfort as they passed one by one across the bridge.[1] . . . Contrary to the leader's expectations, they were allowed to pass unmolested. The Count . . . immediately entered the castle, while the knights were dispersed among the inns and neighbouring houses where shelter had been prepared for them." The reason given for the withdrawal of the Toulousains was, that Peter of Aragon declared that De Montfort would never risk entering Muret if he believed all was lost, but that once in the castle he and all his men could be easily taken or slain.

Muret owed its importance to the castle built here in the twelfth century by the Count of Comminges, and held *in fief* by him from Raymond of Toulouse. Before this the "town" did not exist. It was situated just at the spot where, almost at right angles, the little river Louge flows between deep banks into the Garonne, here a wide and turbulent stream. The castle was situated at the very point of the confluence of the two rivers, the banks of which were here about 60 feet high. The fortress was triangular, and exceedingly strong. The walls of the citadel[2] surrounding the *bourg*, on to which gave the third side of the castle, were less so. The defences of the "town," as we have seen, were

[1] This bridge was of wood, nearly opposite the castle, and lower down the Garonne than the present structure.

[2] The "citadel" comprised the fortified enclosure of *bourg* and castle.

extremely weak. The accompanying diagram [1] will show more satisfactorily than any verbal description the exact position of these divisions, which it is necessary clearly to understand if we would gain a definite idea of the movements of De Montfort, the Bishops, and the Crusaders generally—above all, of St. Dominic, before and during the battle of Muret.



A. Priory of St. Germier. B. Parish Church of St. James. C. Castle. D. Modern bridge. E. Church of St. Sernin.

The little church of St. Sernin [2] in the citadel served as the castle chapel. The parish church of St. James was in the town, separated by a narrow street from the Priory of St. Germier, *intra muros*.[3] It was in this house that St. Dominic

[1] From a sketch by the Very Rev. Jean Lestrade, Curé of Gragnague, modified from a diagram in *La Bataille de Muret* (*op. cit.*).

[2] St. Sernin, a small and beautiful Romanesque building, probably of the tenth century, was the original parish church of the scattered houses of Muret. But with the building of the castle and town and the rapid increase of the population at the beginning of the twelfth century the church of St. James, in the town itself, was erected, and became the parish church of Muret.

[3] This was the third Priory of St. Germier. The first dates from the days of Clovis (481-511), who bestowed on his friend St. Germier, Bishop of Toulouse, a large tract of ground at Ox (or Dox), a few miles from Muret, on which the Saint caused to be built a monastery dedicated to St. Martin of Tours. At the beginning of the twelfth century this monastery, which was lonely and unprotected, was considered unsafe in the then state of

lodged, with the prelates and other clergy. It was in the church of St. James, across the street, that they passed the hours of the battle.

The ruins of the castle and citadel walls still exist, along the banks of the Louge and Garonne; but of the castle itself, razed to the ground in October 1623,[1] of the historic church of St. Sernin, nothing remains. All is destroyed, and on the site stands—oh! shades of the defenders of Muret!—the public slaughter-house, and a lofty water-tower, to which, even if one wished it, entrance is forbidden. The broken walls are chiefly of deep-red brick, extraordinarily massive, infinitely pathetic. They are skirted by a path on the banks of the two rivers. Beyond the Louge, beyond the present village, beyond the railway line from Toulouse to Lourdes and the Pyrenees, stretches far to the horizon the plain of Muret, vast, monotonous, sombre. It was here that the rebel army was encamped, in full view of the citadel, which was built on a higher level than the town.

It does not seem to have occurred to Peter of Aragon and his friends that De Montfort, with his handful of 800 men—for the Viscount de Corbeil had just brought in a reinforcement of about 700 from Carcassonne—could assume the offensive. The enemy knew well that there were only provisions for one day left in Muret. These exhausted, the

the country, and the monks were permitted to build a new church and monastery, *extra muros* (St. Germier-le-Vieux), on the banks of the Louge opposite Muret, not far from the Toulouse Gate. Neither of these buildings is in existence at the present day. Later on the Count of Comminges and the Cathedral Chapter of Toulouse (to the latter of whom the church of St. James belonged) permitted the monks, for even greater security, to build another house within the town itself. This was the Priory, *intra muros*, then a comparatively new building, which sheltered St. Dominic. It is separated from the parish church by a narrow street, and is to-day the *Sous-Préfeture*.

[1] The citadel of Muret, razed in 1623, was then in the possession of the Montpezat family, which levied taxes on all vessels sailing up the Garonne. For this reason it was destroyed by order of the Capitouls of Toulouse. At each corner of the triangular castle was a lofty tower, that at the confluence of the Louge and Garonne "of a terrific height and thickness," says the *procès-verbal* of the demolition. It was the Donjon, or Tower, of the Louge. (*N.B.* Many interesting details as to the fortifications and construction of Muret, perhaps more valuable to the antiquarian than the general reader, have been suppressed in this chapter. They may be found n M. Marcel Dieulafoy's excellent pamphlet.)

taking of the citadel would be an easy matter. The forces of the allies have been variously estimated, but probably numbered 30,000 to 40,000 infantry, and more than 3000 cavalry.[1] The odds were appalling.

That same evening (11th September) the Bishop of Toulouse sent two religious as envoys to the King and to the Toulousains, who formed a large part of the rebel army, begging them once more to come to terms of peace. Peter of Aragon refused point-blank. He was preparing to spend a night of revelry, which left him so exhausted that—it is his own son who relates the fact—he was unable, when hearing Mass next morning, to stand up for the Gospel. The Toulousains promised a definite answer early next day, and retained the religious to take it back. But next day they themselves were to be answered, in a way they little expected.

For, even had De Montfort not earnestly desired it, the lack of food made it absolutely necessary to fight immediately. The prelates, however, yet hoped for a peaceful settlement, especially the Bishop of Toulouse, whose heart yearned over his erring flock, whom he still believed might be brought to a better mind.

There was little sleep in Muret that night! The fortunes of the whole Crusade depended on the morrow, and defeat meant inevitable death to the whole gallant band. What must they have felt as they watched the enemy's camp-fires burning brightly on the plain below; as they listened to the sounds of revelry coming up from the great host which outnumbered them so overwhelmingly? What must it have been for St. Dominic and the other priests in the Priory who understood fully the awful issues involved? We cannot doubt how the night before the battle of Muret was spent by one at least of the little band. Like the Syrian of old, his eyes were opened, and he saw the hosts of the Lord, the horses and chariots of fire, the innumerable company of angels high

[1] Many of the King of Aragon's men (Catalans and Aragonese) had performed prodigies of valour during the Spanish Crusade against the Saracens, the previous year.

above the darkening plain. With St. Paul, St. Dominic must have cried, again and again, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Very early on the morning of the 12th, De Montfort heard Mass in the beautiful little church of St. Sernin, while the greater part of the bishops and clergy, probably including St. Dominic, offered the Holy Sacrifice in the parish church close to the Priory where they had spent the night. All the soldiers who had not already done so confessed, after which all heard Mass and received the Bread of Angels. The remaining poor food in the castle being then divided among them they were ready to fight—if necessary, to die.

Meanwhile the promised answer came from the Toulousains. They could do nothing, they said, apart from the King of Aragon. Even then Foulques would not abandon all hope; he decided to lead a deputation of the clergy present to the King, all walking barefoot, and once more, at that supreme moment, beg for peace. All this time, however, the Toulouse Gate had been left open, it having been impossible to close the breach made the previous day by the besiegers. A troop of cavaliers (attached to the command of the Count of Foix) approached the ramparts "insidiously," dashed through the broken gate, and made an irruption into the town of Muret. But the invaders had counted without De Montfort, who had come down very early to consult with the Bishops and St. Dominic. He fell upon them suddenly with a few of his men and drove them out of the enclosure. Returning to the Priory, where the Bishop of Toulouse was preparing for his embassy to Peter of Aragon, de Montfort cried: "We have suffered enough insults—or rather, too many. The enemy, as you see, is already preparing for action. We are doing nothing. I pray you, give us leave to fight!" And so at last the heroic Bishop was fain to yield, and retreat to the parish church to pray for his people, as the order was given to the 800 Crusaders to arm, and to saddle their horses. It was time! While the Count was speaking, the besiegers had

again crept up to the walls, surrounding Muret from the Gate of Sales to the Louge (both banks of which they held), and a dense shower of stones and arrows rained into the town, and upon the roof of the Priory. If once the the defenders were hemmed in they would be hopelessly trapped.

As De Montfort returned to the castle to put on his own armour he passed St. Sernin, where the Bishop of Uzès, who was saying Mass, had just turned to the people at the *Dominus vobiscum* of the offertory, when the great leader, entering, strode up to the altar, and kneeling with clasped and upraised hands before the Bishop, cried aloud: "My God, I offer you myself, my soul, and my body." Returning shortly afterwards, fully armed, he again offered himself and his sword before the altar, and then went out to his men waiting in the Mercadar,[1] one of whom held his war-horse before the church door. Twice he attempted unsuccessfully to mount. The first time the stirrup broke. The second time the horse, tossing its head, struck him so violent a blow on the forehead that for a moment he was stunned. A roar of derision went up from the assailants outside, to whom all this was clearly visible. "Laugh now," he exclaimed, "and shout if you will. I trust in God to give me the victory, and soon I shall shout after you, to the walls of Toulouse!"

To his men he spoke heroic words, bidding them avoid hand-to-hand combats, but to charge in close line. He had refused to have them counted—there were enough, he said, to gain the victory, though he was leaving the infantry to guard the citadel and taking with him only the cavalry. At the moment of departure the Bishop of Toulouse approached in his pontifical vestments, bearing in his hands a relic of the True Cross, and followed by the other prelates and clergy. All the men, dismounting, knelt reverently, and each in his turn approached to venerate the Sacred

[1] Market-place (see map). The market of Muret had been celebrated since 1090, and was frequented by the whole countryside.

Wood. But after a few minutes the Bishop of Comminges, seeing that time was passing rapidly, gently took the relic into his own hands, and "mounting on a high place," blessed the kneeling soldiers with it. "Go," he cried, "in the name of Jesus Christ! I am witness for you in the day of judgment that whoever falls in this glorious combat shall receive, without pains of purgatory, the eternal bliss and glory of the martyrs, if he have already confessed his sins with contrition, or shall at least have a firm intention of doing so after the battle." Thrice this promise was repeated "at the instance of the knights," and confirmed by the Bishops present; again and again the soldiers renewed their contrition, "forgiving each other mutually"; and then, divided into three companies, in honour of the Blessed Trinity, advanced intrepid against their enemies.

There has been much learned discussion as to the gate by which the Crusaders issued from Muret, but it has been now proved beyond a doubt that they went by the Gate of St. Sernin, opening on to the bridge across the Louge close to the castle. De Montfort knew that it would be mere folly to attempt the Toulouse gate, which was now thickly beset by the first squadron of the enemy. Issuing in perfect silence from the East Gate out of the Mercadar, they followed the track between the wall of the citadel and the Garonne, crossed the bridge of St. Sernin, and re-formed in three squadrons on the flat ground beyond it. Before them lay the hosts of the enemy, drawn up in battle array.

Meantime dissension had arisen in the heretic camp between the King and Raymond VI. The latter, in spite of the overwhelming numerical superiority of his forces, was anxious to pursue his usual tactics and remain in the entrenched camp to receive the shock of the attack which it had become evident was intended. Peter, however, attributed this to fear, and did not scruple to charge Raymond with cowardice. All his allies distrusted him, but they had gone too far to draw back, and must now stand or fall with the man whom they dreaded, we read, as much as they feared De Montfort. It was finally

agreed that the host should be divided into three bodies. The first of these, consisting chiefly of Catalans under the Count of Foix, was already engaged around the walls of Muret. "In order to show . . . that he intended to fight in his own way the King of Aragon changed armour with one of his knights, and announced that he should take command of the first squadron,[1] though it is customary for kings to place themselves at the head of the reserve force." Raymond of Toulouse was in command of the third, which consisted of his own Toulousains.

Between the two armies, now both drawn up on the plain of Muret, lay a shallow, saucer-shaped depression of some extent—the marsh of *Les Pesquiès*. Unless a long *détour* was made it was necessary to cross this, in order to reach the King's army, which was drawn up on the farther side. It was also necessary for the Crusaders to force a passage through the first, or Catalan squadron, which was literally sitting down before the walls of Muret. The men, hungry and weary, in great part disarmed, were resting or eating their noonday meal when, to their amazement, they beheld the first squadron of the Crusaders, whom they were expecting by the Toulouse Gate, suddenly dash upon them at full gallop from the Gate of St. Sernin. There was scarcely time to leap into the saddle. The Crusaders were upon them like the wind, riding through the main body, and driving a large number before them across the marsh, "which reflected the gleam of their swords and helms," back towards the line where the King of Aragon awaited the shock. The Crusaders dashed straight through the first ranks, "as a stone is dropped into water," and vanished for a time from the sight of De Montfort, who was in charge of the third squadron. They were speedily followed by the second body, who rode at full gallop from the St. Sernin gate without making a *détour* by that of Toulouse. The shock was again irresistible. The second squadron also

[1] That is, in order of battle. The first was already besieging Muret. Peter of Aragon assumed command of the second squadron, which was the first to receive the attack.

disappeared among the now wholly disorganised ranks of the Aragonese army.

One of the Crusaders, Alain de Roucy, had determined to slay the King of Aragon, and sought him fiercely in the thick of the combat. Several indeed had taken an oath to do this, as the King once dead, the battle would be half-won. Riding with the second squadron, De Roucy recognised the royal armour and fell upon its wearer. "But the Aragonese playing his part badly the knight suspected the subterfuge. 'It is not the King!' he shouted to his friends. 'Certainly not! The King is here!' cried a voice behind him, and Peter of Aragon threw himself upon his foes like a brave and valiant man." He struck one Crusader to the earth, but his desperate courage was in vain. De Roucy and his companions fell upon him and slew him on the spot. Did he realise his hour had struck? Did he understand as he watched the two companies dash across the plain with the sublime courage that arises only from stern determination and magnificent confidence in a righteous cause, that it was too late? Did he remember the ceaseless pleading of the Bishops, of the Holy Father himself—nay, of the voice of his own stifled conscience, as he watched death racing towards him on those gleaming lances, through the thunder of the horses' hoofs? Did he know that in a few minutes he would be in the presence of that Judge from Whom is no appeal, and recognising himself as a traitor, throw himself in a wave of infinite contrition upon the Divine Mercy he had outraged and betrayed? No longer was mercy to be looked for from man, for "the shock of arms and the noise of blows were . . . like a forest falling beneath a multitude of axes."

Meanwhile De Montfort, who had lost sight of his first two squadrons, now fighting in the heart of the army, charged the left wing of the enemy with dauntless courage. Having made a slight *détour* he found the brook which runs out of the marsh of *Les Pesquiès* to the Garonne between him and his foes, but having speedily discovered a little path across it, "prepared, one might think, by God's own order," he entered

the *mêlée*, and was immediately attacked with fury. His stirrup was broken, one spur became entangled in his accoutrements, but he did not fall. Recovering himself, he knocked one soldier out of his saddle by a single blow of his fist.

It was the combined shock of the three assaults, delivered in such quick succession, which—from a military point of view—decided the victory of Muret. The enemy was utterly disorganised, and as the different sections had no common *esprit-de-corps*, and were in many cases badly disciplined, the moral effect of the triple charge was overwhelming. Unfortunately too, for them, the third or Toulousain squadron "had not been judged worthy to take part in this combat between knights," and the men had sulkily retired to their camp, which was pitched on a slight elevation, the *Colline de Perramon*. Hence they watched the combat, but before it was over, and the scattered Aragonese were flying before the victors, news spread through the ranks that the Crusaders had been vanquished. Thereupon the Toulousains hurriedly left their entrenchments, and "were employing their utmost strength to take the town of Muret" when Simon de Montfort, having called back his men, reappeared in their midst.

Almost the entire contingent was destroyed, and the Catalans who were still left before Muret shared the same fate as the Toulousains. Some of the latter tried to regain their camp. The greater number made for the flotilla of boats which had brought them down from Toulouse. Almost all were intercepted and slain. The victory was complete. Those who did not fall by the sword were drowned in the Garonne during the terrified rush for the boats.[1] Raymond of Toulouse and the redoubtable Count of Foix himself were compelled to save their lives by flight, as did the remaining

[1] The place of this massacre was revealed in 1875, when an unusually high flood of the Garonne laid bare in receding a tract of ground on its banks thickly covered with skeletons beneath a layer of earth from 5 to 7 feet deep. Further north, where the skeletons are more scattered, they are still so numerous that a field cannot be ploughed or a ditch dug without bringing many of them to light. (*Cf.* Dieulafoy, *op. cit.*, p. 30, note.)

soldiers, "like the dust before the wind, the angel of the Lord scattering them," say the Bishops in the letter by which they announced to Pope Innocent the victory of Muret. The losses of the enemy have been variously estimated, but they were enormous. The most probable figure is from 15,000 to 20,000. The Crusaders lost one man—some chroniclers say, not one.

It was not until he was returning in triumph to the castle that De Montfort heard of the death of Peter of Aragon. He immediately ordered one of his men to lead him to the spot where the unfortunate monarch had fallen, nearly a mile distant, and there, standing beside the body of his former enemy, the great Crusader, "a second David beside a second Saul," shed tears of genuine sorrow. By his orders the body was confided for burial to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, who had begged for it, and by them the last rites were performed, for Peter of Aragon had never been excommunicated.

Such was the victory of Muret—with the unique exception of Lepanto perhaps the most notable example of a battle won by prayer.

But where all this time was St. Dominic? A seventeenth-century legend tells us that he was by the side of de Montfort throughout the battle, bearing aloft a great crucifix[1] upon which arrows fell thickly, though the Saint was unwounded; and that his presence in the thick of the combat spurred on the Crusaders to greater deeds of valour. But not a single contemporary authority speaks of him as present—or indeed mentions him at all, and it is clear that the story arose from a misrepresentation of the fact that before the battle, when the Veneration of the Cross was over, the sacred relic was confided by one of the Bishops present into St. Dominic's

[1] A wooden crucifix, in which are fixed three or four splinters of iron, transferred at the Revolution from the House of the Inquisition in Toulouse, "where it had been venerated from time immemorial," to the Basilica of St. Sernin, has long been shown there to establish this tradition. The crucifix, however, has recently been declared by experts to be of fifteenth-century workmanship. For this, if for no other reason, it is impossible that St. Dominic could have carried it at Muret.

hands, who doubtless bore it back immediately to the parish church. For it was here, and not on the bloodstained plain below that our Saint, with the Bishops and clergy, passed those terrible hours when the fortunes of the Crusade, and of the Church in France, were at stake; while thousands of souls were going to their account. "All, after the example of Moses while Joshua fought, lifted their eyes to the heavens whence come salvation and victory; praying God with all their hearts for His servants who were now exposing themselves to such imminent peril for the honour of His Holy name, and for the Faith." Seven Bishops, three abbots, and a number of clergy were present. They sang the *Veni Creator*, repeating fervently the cry: "*Hostem repellas longius, Pacemque dones protinus*" with so mighty a volume of sound that it reached the ears of the heroes below, as well as those of their enemies, nerving the arm of the Crusader, striking terror to the heart of the heretic. For Heaven was being stormed, and not a man fighting for his faith or his life but knew it. And whose intercession would be more powerful with God than that of His servant Dominic?

The parish church of Muret to-day is not the same building as that which stood on the site in the thirteenth century—a much smaller, lower building dating from the eleventh or early twelfth century. In 1473 the fabric had become so dilapidated that the nave threatened ruin, so that the Council of the Community of Muret openly protested that the Cathedral Chapter of Toulouse received all its revenues, but allowed the building to perish. Repairs were undertaken, but slowly, for the work begun in 1473 was not completed till 1612! The new nave was finished in 1540, the choir begun in 1538; the beautiful octagonal fifteen-century steeple, struck by lightning in 1611, was partly rebuilt the next year. But there is one spot in the church which is of true historic interest. It is a little low vaulted chapel, opening out of the north wall of the nave, exactly opposite the south porch. It is the only part of the former church now remaining, and differs totally in

style from the rest of the building. This chapel, now dedicated to Our Lady of the Dying, was certainly known to St. Dominic, for it was not pulled down with the rest of the original fabric, but was incorporated as it stood with the new.

But St. Dominic is not forgotten in Muret. Yearly on the fourth Sunday in August the whole Rosary is recited in his honour, as a thanksgiving for the victory gained through the power of his intercession. Nor does Muret forget her dead! On Wednesday, the third Rogation Day, for nearly 700 years the village procession has halted on a little eminence close to the battlefield, while the *Libera nos Domine* is sung for the souls of the slain. . . .

One result of the battle of Muret was to leave the destinies of the Kingdom of Aragon in the hands of De Montfort, in the person of the little five-year-old son[1] of the dead King, confided to him at Montpellier. "Nothing would have been easier after . . . Muret than to have caused himself (De Montfort) to be proclaimed King of Aragon, or at least Lord of Montpellier, a dependency of that kingdom. But this man, who has been represented as actuated by the maddest ambition, did nothing of the sort. It would not only have been an act of spoliation, it would have been a crime; the crime committed [in intention] by Peter II. himself a few days earlier. For let us never for a moment imagine that the King of Aragon would have attacked the Catholic army at Muret either from attachment to heresy, through friendship for Raymond VI., or for love of the fine lady to whom he wrote the vain and foolish letter preserved by contemporary historians.[2] . . . Peter II. victorious at Muret would have added to his crown Toulouse, Carcassonne, Béziers, Foix, and Pamiers."[3]

It was not to be! The man who had risked his soul to gain great possessions not only lost them all, but left his little

[1] King James I. of Aragon was born in 1208.
[2] See the *Chronicle of Guillaume de Puy Laurens* (edn. Guizot), c. xxi. pp. 242–4. The unsavoury story has been omitted here.
[3] Douais, *Les Albigeois, leurs origines, etc.*, pp. 609–10.

son in the hands of the very man who had the greatest reason to hate him; against whom he had ceaselessly plotted; whose power he had untiringly striven to destroy. De Montfort might have taken a cruel vengeance. What he did, so long as the little prince was under his protection, was to care for him more tenderly than his father had ever done, and to commit him to the charge of one well-fitted for the duty, a young man [1] whom we have already met at Mas Stes. Puelles. It was in the presence of the baby King of Aragon that two saints renewed the friendship begun eight years earlier, Dominic and Peter of Nolasco.

Go to Muret, if you will, on the anniversary of the battle—on a cold, dull, grey September day, when damp yellow leaves spotted with black are falling from the plane-trees; when the sky is covered with a heavy pall of drifting gloom; when the weeping mist threatens every moment to change into driving rain, but clears for an hour towards evening into a pale, opaque horizon of still-threatening cloud, which the setting sun in vain endeavours to transmute into pearl and translucent amethyst. It is all part of the pageant, part of the tragedy, part of the glory of Muret.

To gain a view of the battlefield one must pass through the grass-grown streets of the little town, cross the broad market-place, and thence, by a modern bridge, the racing treacherous Garonne. Some half-mile beyond rises a low ridge, the right bank of the river, the edge of a wide tableland, across which, down the winding white road, De Montfort made his forced march to Muret on the eve of the battle, from Hauterive and Pamiers. Hence, beyond the broad waters of the Garonne, the plain of Muret, almost perfectly flat, stretches towards the horizon of distant, gigantic Pyrenees. It is by no means time lost to spend an hour in wandering along the wooded steeps overhanging the right bank of the river, where a dangerously slippery but delightfully picturesque path leads one from the bridge to the ruins of the ancient chapel of the

[1] St. Peter Nolasco was born in 1189.

Léprosérie, the massive western wall of which rises gaunt and solitary upon a mound opposite the castle-ramparts, but farther down the stream.

The road to the battlefield leads through the village, crosses the Louge on the site of the old Toulouse Gate, and farther on, the railway line, just beyond which lies the cypress-girt cemetery. With this to the left, and a picturesque tree-set farm to the right, one enters the field of Muret.

Imagine a huge grey waste, flat, little cultivated, marshy, cut into irregular squares like a gigantic chessboard by narrow ditches thick with bulrushes and wild peppermint, and crossed in every direction by a distant procession of poplars, with bowed heads, in single file. Across it, diagonally, stretches the pale ribbon of the road to Toulouse, perfectly straight, thinly fringed with slender leafless trees. Here and there a few cottages are scattered, each in a straggling patch of vineyard. To the right sweeps the Garonne, invisible behind its deep banks. Behind is the village, backed by a distant line of low hills, and almost hidden by trees from which the church spire rises pale against a stormy sky. Imagine all this in the cold grey September afternoon, swept occasionally by sudden scuds of flying rain, and ceaselessly by the bitter autumn wind —and you are at Muret.

The farther one journeys along the road the more intense becomes the solitude, the more vast the loneliness. A stray cart passing—the horses gay with the beautiful Toulousain high-peaked collars, gay with fringes and festoons of coloured woollen tassels, and hung with jangling bells; a troop of laughing children; a couple of carters fighting with fists and feet, passed at long intervals, do not dispel, but only accentuate this loneliness. The road is bordered with shallow ditches overflowing with aromatic plants, and the low untrimmed hedges beyond are thick with juicy blackberries. In the distance, at the side of the road, a tall white obelisk points with its slender finger towards the darkening sky.

It is possible, standing here, to reconstruct the whole scene.

Behind that rise in the ground to the left lay the camp; on the very spot on which I am standing the King of Aragon's men must have met the shock of that first dashing charge across the treacherous marsh—a charge which must have needed superhuman courage, when one considers the ground. Beyond, farther up the road, Peter of Aragon must have fallen. I arrive at this conclusion as I find myself at the foot of the obelisk. "*Here fell Peter, King of Aragon, at the Battle of Muret, September* 12, 1213," begins the lengthy, probably flowery, inscription in the undecipherable *Langue d'oc*. The monument was erected to his memory in 1884. It is not far from this spot that Muret yearly chants *Libera nos, Domine*, for the souls of the dead.

It is growing dark as I make my way slowly back to the station, alone with the memories, with the ghosts of Muret. Is it only imagination that crowds the air with invisible presences? Is it only the wind that sighs and whispers—and sometimes moans—in the sedge and bulrushes? Across the whole vast plain, whichever way one turns, moves a distant funeral procession—and this at least is not imagination, though those lines of solemn, gigantic hooded figures, with bowed heads above clasped hands, drifting as it seems against the grey sky, over the endless flats, are nothing but rows of poplar trees, bending before the wind. In daylight one does not realise how many there are, crossing the field of Muret at all angles, but all travelling in one direction to-night, towards the south, towards Spain, towards the Pyrenees, whose cloudy summits were distinctly visible an hour ago on the far horizon. My road, too, leads to the south, and as the lights of the distant station begin to twinkle I see, just to the right of the flashing signals, what is perhaps the goal of those impalpable, floating wraiths. Behind a high white wall surrounding some great enclosure sways a vast crowd of huge, shadowy forms, draped and swathed in black, their bowed heads hidden beneath sharply pointed cowls, their flowing robes trailing in the wind; hooded spectres like the *Frati della Misericordia* at

Florence. The rustle of their robes, the inaudible murmur of a hundred speechless voices floats down to me across the darkening flats. . . .

In the sunshine my ghosts are Tuscan cypresses, blue-green, with heavy purple shadows, keeping watch over the white tombs behind the long cemetery wall. But to-night at least they are masked and hooded Brothers of Pity, whispering their eternal *De Profundis* for the souls of the slain, across the battlefield of Muret. . . .

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

ANCIENT TOWER OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. VINCENT AT CASTRES

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

TOWER OF THE "JACOBIN" CHURCH, TOULOUSE

(The pillared doorway is that of the Chapter-House. The Cloister on this side was destroyed at the Revolution)

XVIII

THE MIRACLE OF CASTRES, AND THE GROTTO IN THE SIDOBRE

St. Dominic was at Castres during the Lent of 1214, at the historic monastery whose site to-day is paved by the fine cobbles of the market-place, and of which no trace is left save one grand old Romanesque tower. Few towns have so completely stripped themselves of their mediæval trappings. Except this ancient tower, which to-day forms part of the town-hall, and an old twelfth century *donjon* incorporated into the college buildings, no monument in Castres is anterior to 1678, and most of the churches were built in the eighteenth century. The fifteenth-century houses along the Agout, here a dull and sluggish river, tributary of the Tarn, spanned by a beautiful single-arch bridge, are interesting, but have been much modernised.

But the Castres of St. Dominic's day was a very different place. One of the most important and ancient Roman encampments in France, it had developed through the centuries into a beautiful and flourishing town, and its castle, yielded to Simon de Montfort after the siege of Carcassonne, was well nigh impregnable. Its chief glory, however, was the celebrated abbey, founded in the seventh century by a company of noble knights who had met on the banks of the Agout to live in prayer and penitence under the Rule of St. Benedict. "In the year 858, under Abbot Gislebert, one of the monks returning from Valencia in Spain had brought back with him the relics of the martyr St. Vincent. The Benedictine church was henceforth known by the name of this saint, and was speedily besieged by numerous crowds of pilgrims. In

the twelfth century the monks, having constructed a second large abbey at some distance from the town, the care of the sanctuary of St. Vincent was confided by them to the Canons Regular of St. Augustine. These Canons, however, having fulfilled their duties very imperfectly, Simon de Montfort, who had become undisputed master of the territory of Castres . . . founded by devotion (1211), according to the custom of the Church in France, twelve prebends for as many chaplains, to whom he gave as Prior his own chaplain, Master Matthew." This Prior is better known to us as the celebrated Dominican, Father Matthew of France, one of the early companions of St. Dominic; and this by reason of what took place in the middle of that Lent of 1214 which Dominic spent at Castres.

He had often visited the monastery, asking hospitality there, praying before the relics of St. Vincent, preaching to the people in the town, and spending his nights in the wilds of the Sidobre. But in 1214 an event happened which was destined not only to produce a great and immediate result, but later to change the history and destiny of the monastery itself.

"On a certain day, St. Dominic," says Etienne de Salagnac, "after the last Masses had been said in the great church, remained according to his custom in prayer before the altar. When meal-time came the table was prepared, but the Saint did not appear. The Prior, Father Matthew, sent one of his clerics to seek him. The young cleric entered the church, and beheld Blessed Dominic lifted entirely above the earth at the height of about 9 inches.[1] Astonished and terrified, he ran to inform the Prior. Fr. Matthew, after waiting a long time, went himself to the church, where he found the Saint still raised above the ground, but now at the height of a *coudée*. He determined to remain there until, returning from

[1] "*Demi-coudée.*" The *coudée*, an ancient measure of length, from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, is of Egyptian origin. The Roman *cubit* was 1½ feet. The *coudée* was naturally of uncertain length, varying from 442–720 centimètres. Roughly speaking, it was about 1½ feet (English measure).

heavenly realms to his earthly habitation, Dominic should fall prostrate before the altar."

Deeply moved at what he had seen, the Prior shortly afterwards joined himself to the Saint as his companion; "Blessed Dominic promising him, as he did to each whom he received, the Bread of Life and the Water of Heaven. . . . It was thus that the Prior of St. Vincent of Castres became a disciple of St. Dominic, and the first and only Abbot of the Order."

But this was not all. "The little cleric who had surprised St. Dominic in ecstasy was a native of Castres named Sicard Sabbatier. The remembrance of what he had seen never faded from his memory, and to his old age he never wearied of telling the story. Now, more than forty years from the day when he had seen St. Dominic ravished in spirit and lifted from the earth, Sicard Sabbatier, become a 'great cleric,' as men said in those days, was in 1258 canon of this very church of St. Vincent, and Archdeacon of Lantarès. . . . At this time the members of the college of priests founded by Simon de Montfort were few in number, and for the greater part dwelt with their Bishop at Albi. The Monks of St. Benedict had again taken possession of the church and the tomb of St. Vincent."

The district was then governed by Philip de Montfort, great-nephew of Count Simon, in the name of his father, then absent with St. Louis on a Crusade to the Holy Land. Philip, who, we are told, was "pious and good" and greatly loved the Friars Preachers,[1] decided, in consultation with Maître Sicard, the "little cleric" of former days, and the Bishop of Albi (in whose diocese Castres was situated), to invite the Dominicans to take possession of the very church where the miracle occurred. The Benedictines most naturally warmly opposed this idea, but De Montfort had his way. After long and earnest representations to the Abbot of St. Vincent and his monks, to the Bishop of Albi, and to the

[1] "*Fratres plurimum diligebat.*"

Chapter-General of the Dominicans, which was held at Toulouse in May 1268, under the Master-General, Blessed Humbert de Romans, the Count finally appealed to Pope Alexander II. In a letter to that Pontiff, sent by the hand of a great lawyer, he pleads with the Holy Father to give him for the Friars Preachers the church and tomb of St. Vincent "as a recompense for all the blood of the De Montforts shed in obedience to the Holy Roman Church, and in her honour." He also promised to endow magnificently the future Priory of the Dominicans.

Pope Alexander agreed, and (September 7, 1258) the Benedictine Abbot and monks submitting, formally dispossessed themselves of the church and monastery of St. Vincent by a public act, dated, and signed by the parties concerned, to which Maître Sicard had the great joy to be witness.

Consequently, the Provincial Chapter, which had lately met at Montpellier on the Feast of St. Dominic, "having accepted and registered . . . all which had been done and concluded for this foundation, sent some Friars to take possession of their new convent." Their Vicar was Bernard de Bocaciis, "a religious man, good, faithful, and sincere," says Bernard Gui. This religious, who was formerly Fr. Bernard Gui's Prior in the monastery of Albi, told him that in 1259 Philip de Montfort and many of his friends, together with the Benedictine Abbot and some of his monks, and himself, the Vicar, met one night to ascertain the exact spot where the relics of St. Vincent were buried. "Having opened the tomb, they beheld indeed the blessed relics of the Saint, and even the traces of burning left by fire on his body." They also found there the deed in which the monk Andaldo attested that in the ninth century he had himself brought St. Vincent's body from Valencia.[1]

In 1260 the Provincial Chapter held at Marseilles, on August 4, accepted officially the monastery of Castres for the Order; appointing a Lector and a number of Friars. A few

[1] St. Vincent, deacon, was martyred at Valencia at the beginning of the fourth century, during the persecution of Diocletian.

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weeks later (Aug. 29), "the Dominicans, walking in procession with their Provincial . . . entered the church of St. Vincent of Castres, which was formally handed over to them by the Bishop of Albi in presence of Philip de Montfort, the clergy and nobles of the country, and a great multitude of people." Maître Sicard Sabbatier might now in peace sing *Nunc Dimittis*. God, however, preserved him long enough in this world to see and rejoice in the prosperity of the work at which he had so ardently laboured. And finally the aged man, having received the habit of the Order, died a holy death on Feb. 20, 1276, and was buried in the church of the Friars at Castres.

So runs the beautiful, simple story, instinct with the eager, childlike spirit of mediævalism. It may be added that Pierre Bertrand, the judge who had been De Montfort's envoy to Pope Alexander, himself took the habit, held office for many years, became Prior of Castres in 1283, "and there gently ended his life," August 19, 1297, being buried in the cloister.

His ashes, with those of hundreds of his white-robed brethren, await the Resurrection beneath the stones of the market-place of Castres, the *Place Nationale*, a great oblong space, at one corner of which rises the ancient tower upon which St. Dominic has looked, the only relic of the vanished grandeur of the great monastery of St. Vincent. All has been swept away. What the Huguenots spared the Revolution destroyed, though the "*Quai des Jacobins*" and the "*Rue Sabbatier*" still, by their names, link the Castres of to-day with the golden past. At Serviès, a village three or four leagues distant, an ancient Gothic doorway was brought hence "from the church of the Jacobins." And that, apparently, is all.

Twice destroyed, the monastery rose from its ashes after the sacrilege of the Huguenots in the sixteenth century to perish for ever in the awful cataclysm of the Revolution. "The Dominican monastery at Castres, one of the finest in the Order, fruitful in men of science and sanctity, persevered in its original fervour until the 'Reformation.'" In the sixteenth century the Huguenots sacked and entirely ruined both mon-

astery and church. Thirty-nine religious were massacred, among them the V. R. Fr. Jean Guillot, whose cruel martyrdom is described in the chronicle of Jean de Réchac. The Friars, says this writer, foreseeing the outburst, deposited with the Consuls of the town the *châsse* of St. Vincent, with the relics and silver of the convent, which weighed 284 marks. These Consuls, outwardly Catholics, but in reality heretics, burnt the relics and sold the silver. Nevertheless, after the victories of Louis XIII., the demolished convent was rebuilt by the indefatigable industry and diligence of Fr. Jean Auriac, a religious of the former monastery. The enclosure was restored, the ancient devotions resumed, and the religious worked here with great success. The first monastery was so magnificent, its buildings so vast—the library was over 100 feet long —and it was so reverenced in the Order for being the depository of the relics of St. Vincent, that the General Chapter of 1352 was held here.[1]

After the Restoration a relic of St. Vincent was brought from the convent at Avignon, and bestowed upon the Prior of Castres in presence of several Canons of the Cathedral, and of the Notary-Apostolic.

"The French Revolution completed the work of destruction begun by the Huguenots. At the present day the last relic of the Saint has disappeared, while of the church and convent nothing remains. All was levelled in 1827 to establish the *Place Nationale*."

But if the famous convent has vanished, not even the Revolution has laid impious hands on the Grotto of St. Dominic. There, at least, there was nothing to steal!

The country round Castres itself is tame and monotonous; but two or three leagues to the east rises an outlying spur of the Southern Cevennes, on which lies the grim and terrible Sidobre, fascinating to the geologist by its subterranean river and streams, its curious rock-formations, and the fact that it is a perfect example of the bed of a prehistoric glacier; to the

[1] *Cartulaire diplomatique de St. Dominique, I.*, pp. 448–9.

artist by its wild and savage scenery; and to the pilgrim by the thought that St. Dominic here sought and found the solitude which he loved.

"It is impossible to reach the *Grotte de St. Dominique* without a guide," I was told in Castres, where I hired a bicycle for this pilgrimage of unknown length, and rode away alone over the close-set cobblestones which are not meant for English feet or American shoes! For a few miles the road ran over a succession of low hills, but before long a sign-post by the wayside announced in large letters, "*à la Grotte de St. Dominique*," just as the ground began to rise steeply on either hand, and the way led along the bottom of a valley. Thereafter the whole journey was uphill, a gentle ascent at first, but after a mile or two exceedingly steep. It was the slope of the plateau of the Sidobre. The track wound through scanty woods, where young hazels and larches maintained a precarious existence on patches of thin grass, amongst great boulders of grey rock.

A little girl herding a couple of white cows told me that the Grotto was much farther on, and I probably should not find it. At a certain spot one had to leave the path and plunge down into the woods below to the left, and there was no sign-post, nothing to guide one. With this encouraging news I rode on, but the hill became so steep I was soon fain to walk. Every step seemed to take one deeper into an enormous, desolate solitude.

The woods suddenly ceased, and the track emerged into a magnificent cup-shaped amphitheatre of smooth turf-clad hills, exceedingly steep and slippery. The road wound round the inside of this great hollow. On the far side, large round grey boulders lay upon the hillside like a flock of gigantic sheep. An old lame cowherd repeated the information that I should never find the Grotto alone. People who came here to see the *Rocher Tremblant*, or the *Sept Faux*,[1] which were higher up the hill, always brought their guides with them, he

[1] A celebrated rocking-stone, one of seven groups of enormous, curiously-shaped boulders.

added cheerfully. "St. Dominic will find the Grotto for me," I told him, and left him open-mouthed. Wilder and bleaker grew the scenery as I climbed the long curve of the road, and reached at last the Sidobre itself.

The Sidobre is a triangular tableland, of which the Agout and the Thoré form, roughly speaking, two sides, the latter river flowing into the former a little distance below Castres. It belongs to the Southern Cevennes, that curious range, the "Backbone of France," of which the northern and southern divisions are of granitic formation, and the centre — and by far the most interesting—is entirely volcanic.[1] The Sidobre is nothing more nor less than an ancient glacier-bed; and its round, ice-worn granite boulders lay in St. Dominic's day exactly as they lie in our own—as they have lain for untold ages. It is an outlying district of the gloomy and terrible *Causses*, which extend southward from Albi, "uncultured, monotonous, treeless, lifeless, almost without inhabitant." The highest parts of this district have the aspect of deserts, "bare and barrren, suffering all the extremes of climate—covered with snow in winter for many months, and in summer without a drop of water, all rain instantly disappearing into the crevices of the rock, where, far below, after its subterranean course, it emerges as an ice-cold river." Formed of Jurassic calcareous rock, the *Causses* are a physical phenomenon unique in Europe. "Imagine a great table of stone, elevated between Mende, Rodez, and Albi, gently inclining towards the Atlantic, formerly one solid mass, now broken by geological faults, and hollowed and tunnelled by erosion into yawning chasms between formidable precipices of rock, and you will form a good idea of the *Causses*."

The region is chiefly remarkable for its subterranean rivers, some of which, after a course of a few yards, plunge suddenly

[1] Anyone who cares to see a city built upon an extinct volcano, with churches and castles perched on the point of apparently inaccessible needles of rock rising abruptly from the plain, should visit Le Puy-en-Velay in this district, whose glorious grey cathedral is built entirely of lava. It is easily reached from Lyons, the railway (after St. Etienne) passing through some of the most characteristic scenery of the central Cevennes. Le Puy is celebrated by the miracles of another Saint, Antony of Padua.

into a bottomless pit with the noise of thunder, and are lost to sight for miles. Along their hidden courses are found some of the most curious and interesting caverns in France—one of which is known to be over four miles long, and is yet only partially explored. These caves, however, are only in part due to erosion; many are caused by the geological "faults" mentioned above, and these, naturally, are by far the most beautiful.

Such is the Sidobre; such it was in the thirteenth century, and such it will be till the end of Time, unless some catastrophic earthquake hurl its mighty boulders far into the valleys below, which are as fertile as the *Causses* are barren. Castles may crumble, cathedrals be rebuilt, towns and villages burnt or razed to the ground, so that in visiting any of these it is often difficult to say: "On this spot St. Dominic stood; in this church and from this very pulpit he preached to the people; in these cloisters and beneath these arches he walked and meditated." But the Sidobre is the same, eternally the same! St. Dominic climbed these bleak hillsides; he rested upon these grey and naked rocks; he heard the hollow roar of the subterranean torrents; he prayed in this grim and barren desert. And for this reason the Sidobre is in a certain sense the most pathetically interesting of all Dominican pilgrimages, as it is certainly the most difficult and inaccessible; for this reason I knew I should find the Grotto.

Standing for a moment on the brow of the hill, looking down into the vast green amphitheatre below, I espied two approaching figures, also on bicycles, a young priest and a little boy. Then I knew I was in the right way, and all would be well. They passed me, and I followed at a little distance, through a grey, low-roofed village, apparently deserted in the warm afternoon sunshine, except for a couple of women beating linen at the well. The Grotto was still much further on, they said, and added the usual information, that I should never find it alone.

After a few turns of the track, which now again wound between stunted woods, which sloped sharply up to the right

and down to the left, I came upon the two travellers. In the path was lying a dead hare,—only just dead, and with no mark to show how it had died. The little boy, who was about ten, was bending over it with grief and compassion, and was evidently anxious to give it funeral honours. As I passed, the priest spoke, and asked my advice in the matter; and finally a temporary grave, under the thick grass growing beneath a great grey boulder, was decided upon. The ceremony over, the little boy asked if I too was going to see the *Rocher Tremblant*, an extraordinary rocking-stone, one of many in the district, forming one of the natural curiosities called the *Sept Faux*, from their fanciful resemblance to natural objects—the Three Cheeses, the Goose, the Cure's Hat, and the Loaf of Bread. All these are glacier-ground boulders, deposited by the mighty ice-river in exactly the positions in which they are seen to-day; some at an angle so extraordinary that one can well understand the peasants, ignorant of glaciers and the Ice Age, imagining them to have been so placed by the devil himself.

I told the little boy I was trying to find the Grotto of St. Dominic; to which the young abbé replied that when they had seen the *Rocher Tremblant* they too were going to visit the Grotto, though he was not sure of its whereabouts, in spite of his having been here once before, years ago. The entrance, he said, was so small that it might easily be overlooked among the boulders.

After another half-mile we dismounted again, boy and abbé climbing up to the right among the rocks and trees, while I, hiding my bicycle beneath a clump of ferns, scrambled down between enormous smooth boulders to a little brook far below, which had just emerged from the hill-side, and which ran clear and sparkling over clean white sand.

Sitting on a rock down here, with the gorge rising sheer on either hand, dark and frowning, shadowy with sombre pine-trees, not all the brilliant autumn sunshine, not the lovely clumps of fragrant purple heather growing among the boulders, could dissipate the gloom of the place. The silence was un-

Photo: Lawrance, London

IN THE SIDOBRE: ENTRANCE TO THE GROTTO OF ST. DOMINIC

broken, except by the chatter of the brook, and a dull terrific roar, which I rightly guessed to be that of a subterranean river. The voices of my companions had long since died away, and the loneliness was overwhelming. What must it be in winter? What must it have been in the bitter March weather when in that Lent of 1214, after the miracle at Castres, St. Dominic, "as was his custom when he came into this country," retired here to be alone with God? The nearest cottages are at least a couple of miles away, and might as well be a couple of hundred. This narrow valley was the bed of the glacier itself, and the thousands of enormous grey boulders, some slippery smooth, some rough with lichen, lying in tumbled confusion as thick upon the hillsides as shingle on a surf-beach, completed the desolation. What a place to make a retreat!

After awhile I began to think it time to find the Grotto, but amidst these trackless boulders, many of which were the size of a small haystack, tumbling over each other in a way that demanded careful negotiation and steady nerves, how was it possible to find the opening? For nearly an hour I tried in vain, but finally arrived at a point where two enormous slanting masses met in such a way that a long passage was formed between them—a passage not three inches wide at the bottom, but widening considerably as the rocks sloped upwards. Beyond this there certainly was an opening—a deep dark hole, with a drop of certainly five feet on to a huge, round, and extremely slippery stone below. Evidently this was the entrance, but it was impossible to see what was within, for a gigantic boulder twenty feet long lay like a fallen tower across the top, forming a lintel to this formidable doorway and shutting out all the light.

Reluctantly I was preparing to turn away, uncertain what abysses might not be concealed beneath, when voices became audible, and the next moment, between two rocks opposite me, appeared a head—that of the little boy. "Madame," he cried, breathless, "I have found the Grotto of St. Dominic. Come and see it." "But I have found it too," I told him,

"and I think it is here!" Before he could answer, a second head appeared. "This is the place!" cried the young priest, "I remember it perfectly now. We must get round to your side, and then we can make our way in."

In a few minutes we all stood together, looking down into the depths below. The priest gathered his cassock round him and leapt down like a goat; and the little boy bravely tumbled after him. Declining to imagine how I was to get back again, I too slid down the boulder, and alighted on the slippery stone beneath. We were at the entrance of a dark cave.

"What we really need," remarked the abbé, feeling in his pockets, "is a candle. I forgot to bring one," he added apologetically. None of us had one. Dazzled by the sunshine outside, our unaccustomed eyes by degrees took in dimly the outlines, vague and shadowy, of a lofty hall, which was simply a hollow heap of Titanic boulders.

"I can supply the need," said a small voice. "Have you found a candle?" inquired the abbé, hopefully. The little boy shook his head, and drew from his pocket a flat case, from which he extracted a tiny mirror. "Madame, I am a man of resources!" he announced gravely, but triumphantly, as he threw one brilliant reflection after another upon the dark corners, and the appalling vault of the roof.

The Grotto is roughly oblong—perhaps thirty feet long by twenty high—and its roof is formed of enormous rocks held together by nothing but their own pressure. In the middle, looking as if it must fall every moment, was one pear-shaped boulder, of which the broad end was downwards! The floor was a confusion of round and broken rocks, some small, some mighty slabs of stone as long and wide as a billiard-table. Between them trickled ice-cold water, which ran in a tiny rivulet to the stream outside.

The priest showed me the little hollow, scraped high up in the side of the rock, which tradition says was used by St. Dominic as a holy-water stoup. He laid my rosary in it for me—for it was too high for any but a tall man to reach, and

when I got it back I found the *bénitier* was still full, though not of holy water!

We stood there silently for a few minutes in that dark, damp cave, full of the awful roar of the subterranean torrent which flows unseen beneath it. Did St. Dominic discover this savage retreat for himself, in his wanderings on the hillside? Did some shepherd, to whom he talked, show it to him? It is sublime in its loneliness, its grandeur, its utter desolation. After the bloodstained field of Muret, after the labours and anxieties of the foundation of Prouille, before the birth of the First Order in Toulouse, St. Dominic came here to be alone with God, like Moses in the wilds of Sinaï. Truly, this place is well named the Chaos of the Sidobre.

Climbing out was, after all, an easier matter than getting in, thanks to the cracks and fissures in the rocks, and once more we all stood outside in the silent sunshine. Then I took leave of the abbé and of the man of resources, who were going to spend the rest of the day scrambling among the rocks, and made my way back down the stony road to Castres.

"You found the Grotto without a guide? But it is a thing unheard-of!" cried the proprietor of the bicycle, as I rode up to his door.

"No," I told him, "St. Dominic sent me two guides!"

XIX

THE CLOISTERS OF ST. LIZIER

St. Lizier is a curiously mediæval little place! Perched on its steep hill above the racing waters of the Salat, from which the houses rise in terraces; crowned with its cathedral, and girded with the remains of ancient fortifications, few cities are so small, so completely out of the world.

Yet it played a part by no means insignificant in the history of the Midi in the Middle Ages, when it was a stronghold of importance, and the episcopal city of the diocese of Couserans —the third see refused by St. Dominic.

Couserans, whose southern boundary was the barricade of the Pyrenees, formed under Augustus part of the Roman province of *Novempopulania*—mediæval Guienne.[1] The tribe of the *Consorani*, from which the district took its name, was established here at least as early as 81 B.C., and it is believed it drove out the race already in possession of the country, a people probably of Celtic origin. Until the ninth century Couserans followed the usual fortunes of the provinces of the Midi; was swept by barbarians, reconquered by the Romans, ceded to the Franks, cruelly ravaged by the Saracens, who, in 732, and again in 793, devastated the whole country and burnt the town once known as Austria, but from the sixth century as St. Lizier. It was included in Charlemagne's "Kingdom of the South," but, being a fruitful and desirable country, it was hotly disputed by neighbouring nobles, and finally appropriated by the Counts of Comminges, while its title of countship was gradually merged with that of Foix.

[1] The boundaries of Guienne frequently changed. Gascony, the southern district, was made up of fiefs, partly of Aragon, partly of England, in St. Dominic's day.

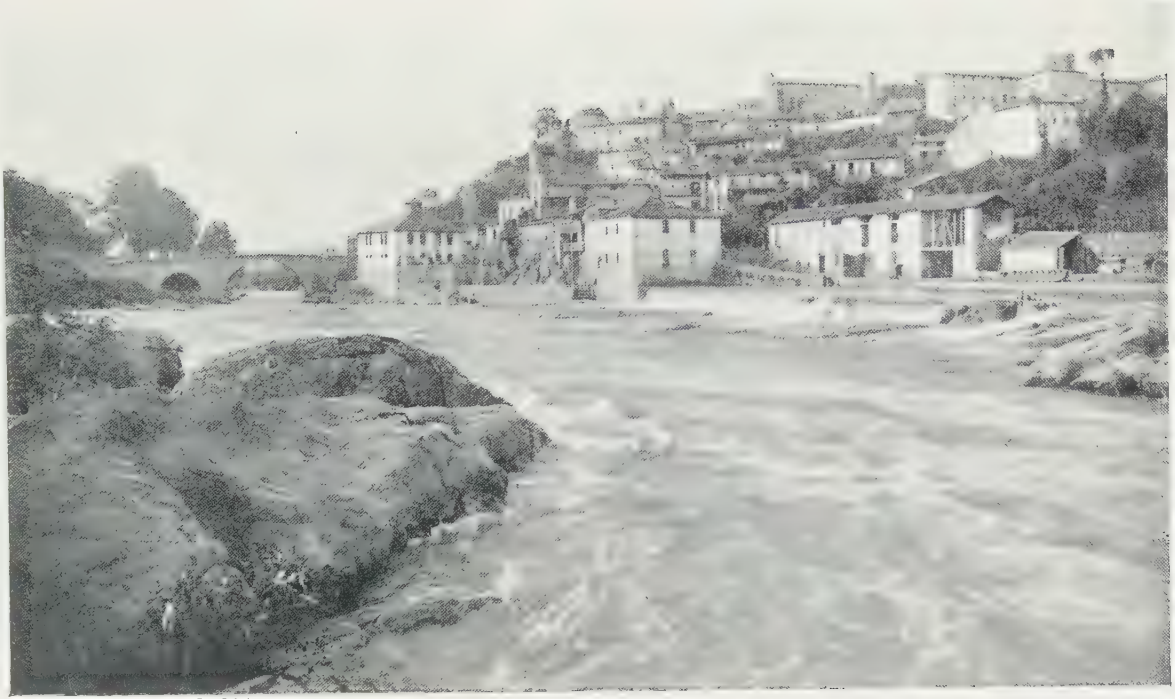

Photo: M. Malfilatre, St. Lizier

ST. LIZIER

The Count of Comminges in St. Dominic's day was, as we have seen, a notorious persecutor of the Church, if not openly a heretic. In Couserans, therefore, the Catharists could flourish unchecked, and the diocese was overrun with them. As was often the case, they concentrated in the principal city—that of St. Lizier.

The ancient stronghold of Austria, once the seat of a Roman Governor, and, later, that of Visigothic and Frankish Counts, was evangelised by St. Valier, in whom some authorities have recognised St. Valerius of Saragossa, banished from his diocese during the persecution of Diocletian by the prefect Dacian, in 305; and whose deacon, the celebrated martyr of Valencia, St. Vincent, was in mediæval days so popular a saint in the Midi. If this hypothesis be accepted, it would fix the foundation of the see of Austria at 305-306. It is possible that there were even then Christians in the country. St. Saturnin, St. Papoul, had preached at Toulouse and in all the region around in the first century; the north of Spain already had its bishops and martyrs, but, writes the present archpriest of St. Lizier, "if there were Christians here, there was no officially constituted Church."

The Consorani were pagans who worshipped fire and water. Even yet their memory is perpetuated in the many "sacred wells" of the neighbourhood, many of which have long been "Christianised." Their priests were Druids, and their religion closely resembled that of the ancient Britons. A great altar to the Celtic goddess Andli stood on a commanding hill, where it caught the first rays of the rising sun. But St. Valier found Austria full of altars to the Roman divinities—here a Janus with two faces, here a shrine of Minerva the warrior-goddess; there a temple of Mars, another dedicated to Jupiter, and down by the river a sacred grove. We have little but tradition to enlighten us as to the Saint's mission in the Couserans. The Basilica built in 550 over his incorrupt body was swept away by the Saracens in the eighth century, but his name is still perpetuated by the church of St. Valier in the neighbouring town of St. Girons.

In 498 St. Lizier, a priest of noble Spanish family, then attached to the diocese of Rodez, was appointed Bishop of Couserans, at the time when the country had fallen under the dominion of the terrible Visigoths. Until his death in 542, the Saint constituted himself the champion of his people, not only against the cruelty of the conquerors, but against the Arian heresy of which they were sectaries. So illustrious did he become by his courage, his holiness, and the miracles which he wrought during his lifetime, that after his death Austria was known as the city of St. Lizier, a title she still retains. The cathedral, destroyed by the Arians, was rebuilt by St. Lizier, and dedicated to St. Martin of Tours. The greater part of his relics are preserved in the present cathedral, which bears his name, and was built on the site of the oratory which he constructed; but some are venerated in the Basilica of St. Sernin of Toulouse, and others in churches of Aragon and Catalonia.[1]

St. Lizier has been for many centuries a city of two cathedrals. The smaller (now the chapel of the lunatic asylum established in the former episcopal palace) dedicated to *Notre Dame de la Sède*, and built in the fourteenth century, probably occupies the site of the ancient church of St. Martin already mentioned. The second, the present Cathedral of St. Lizier, was consecrated by its Bishop, St. Raymond of Durban, in 1117, though part of the fabric dates from much earlier days. It was greatly added to in the latter half of the thirteenth century. It is this cathedral which is so closely connected with St. Dominic. Though in 1757 the chapters of both cathedrals were formally united by the Bishop at *Notre Dame de la Sède*, for reasons of convenience, St. Lizier still retained its ancient dignity, though no longer the actual cathedral church; and in 1910 was declared by Pope Pius X. to be restored to its original honour. At the same time the title of the diocese of Couserans, "suppressed" at

[1] St. Lizier is invoked against mental maladies and madness, perhaps on account of a miraculous cure he wrought upon a man terribly bitten by a mad dog.

Photo: M. Malfilatre, St. Lizier

CATHEDRAL OF ST. LIZIER, FROM THE SOUTH

the Revolution, was added, with that of Mirepoix, to that of the Bishop of Pamiers.

The importance of St. Lizier as a city was finally destroyed at the Revolution, but the town had always been singularly unfortunate, and had never completely recovered from the ruin inflicted upon it in 1130 by the heretic Count of Comminges, Bernard IV., great-grandfather of De Montfort's enemy, who, to revenge himself upon its Bishop, whose plain-speaking had offended him, threw down its walls and threatened its very existence. Though its Bishops never deserted it, and it remained the capital of the See of Couserans, it was compelled to watch through the centuries from its rocky eminence the village of St. Girons, to-day a flourishing town a mile higher up the valley of the Salat, growing in importance, and gradually absorbing the manufacturers and attracting the commerce which should by rights have belonged to the older city. This, however, though selfishly, the pilgrim of to-day will not regret, for St. Lizier is utterly unspoilt, and is, in its beautiful and pathetic isolation, an ideal spot in which to pass a few peaceful weeks in the heart of perfect country.

The ancient diocese of Couserans was one of the less important sees of the Midi, and its bishops were suffragans of the Archbishops of Auch. It was in 1214 that Garcias de l'Orte, Bishop of Comminges, the heroic prelate whom we remember as blessing the Crusaders with the relic of the True Cross before the battle of Muret, was appointed to the archdiocese,[1] and lost no time in nominating his beloved

[1] Auch, which was probably known to St. Dominic, is a most interesting town. It is the ancient Iberian *Elimberis*, and long before the Roman conquest was the capital of the *Auxii*. It became, as *Augusta Auxiorum*, under the Romans, the capital of the twelve cities of the *Novempopulania*, and was evangelised in the third century. It shared with Trèves and Autun the honour of being one of the three principal towns of Gaul, and in the fifth century became the seat of an Archbishopric. The church of St. Orens originally served as cathedral. In the sacristy is still preserved a curious ivory elephant, known as the *Cor de St. Orens*, the tradition being that with this horn the Saint, who was one of the fourth century missionaries of the country, summoned the faithful to Mass. Celebrated as a cure for aural diseases, many deaf men came hither on great Feasts to be cured by its sound, "*se faire corner*," by the sacristan. The city, in the Province of Guienne, belonged to England 1295–1360.

friend St. Dominic to the just-vacant see of Couserans. But Dominic declined the honour steadily and resolutely, to the intense disappointment of the Archbishop, a disappointment the keener as it was not the first time our Saint had made such a refusal.

In 1212 [1] the Chapter of Béziers, upon the death of their Bishop, Guillame d'Aigrefeuille, had hastened to offer the important see to him "whose reputation as a saint, apostle, and miracle-worker increased day by day." Dominic refused "energetically." A year or two later, on the translation of his friend the Bishop of Comminges [2] to the Archdiocese of Auch, the Chapter of St. Bertrand de Comminges, "witness of the life and apostolate of Dominic, at the instigation of the new Archbishop chose in its turn this servant of God; but a second time Dominic the humble declined the honour, declaring that instead of bearing an episcopal title he wished to live with his brethren in absolute poverty." This decision the Archbishop and Chapter, sorely against their will, were compelled to accept. Once again, as we have seen, the Archbishop intervened, doubtless thinking that it might be more possible to induce his friend to accept the small and comparatively unimportant see of Couserans, only to meet for the last time the firm refusal: "*nolo episcopari.*"

It was not from want of experience that Dominic declined the honour. He was still (1214) administrator of the important diocese of Carcassonne, whose bishop was yet absent on behalf of the Crusade. Nor was his apostolate confined at this time to Carcassonne, Prouille, and Fanjeaux, for "the Saint continued with ardour and indefatigable perseverance his work of evangelisation in the neighbouring dioceses of

[1] This date is given by Percin. Other historians incline to the belief that the offer was made in January 1215, after the death of Bishop St. Gervais.

[2] The bishopric of Comminges was founded in 506, and "suppressed" in 1801. The magnificent pile of the Cathedral Church of St. Bertrand was built in the eleventh century. The cloister is even more beautiful than that of St. Lizier, the details of the capitals, and some of the columns, being unique. One of the latter is formed by four upright human figures. The Countship dated from 830. Comminges was the sister of Couserans.

Béziers, Albi, Toulouse, Comminges, and Couserans, being . . . a zealous lover of souls." But it was not alone his marvellous humility which shrank from accepting an honour for which by birth, education, learning, and personal holiness he was so eminently fitted. He understood that God called him to other work. Rather than accept the episcopate or any other dignity, he once exclaimed, he would escape by night, taking with him only his staff. "Blessed Dominic," says Constantino di Orvieto, "had so trampled under foot the world and its glory, like Peter walking on the waters, that he could not fix his heart upon them; thus imitating Him who, when the crowd would have taken Him by force to make Him a king, fled to the mountain." "The Saint," says another biographer, "preferred to humiliate himself with the humble; he placed the Poverty of Christ above thrones and empires, and only cared to be free from all earthly bonds in order to become the servant of all."

But to the Archbishop, who tenderly urged on his friend the acceptance of the little diocese of Couserans, Dominic replied, as was attested by the Abbot of Boulbonne at the Canonisation of the Saint, that his duty was to occupy himself with his "new plantation" of Preachers and nuns at Prouille, that this was his vocation and his mission, and he could accept no other. He loved St Lizier, but his heart was at Prouille. And in spite of the regret of his friends, of the loss to the Church in France, we to-day can only rejoice at a decision so evidently inspired by the Holy Spirit, for it is to that clear vision of duty that the world owes the Order of Friars Preachers.

The best view of St. Lizier, picturesque on its hill, is gained from the bridge which leads into the city across the rushing, foaming waters of the Salat, which here has hewn itself a bed out of the solid rock. About the arches of this old bridge, probably of Roman origin, is entwined one of those semi-allegoric, wholly delightful mediæval legends of which a thousand still survive, attributing it to the workman-

ship of the devil.[1] The usual pact was made between Satan and the master-workman; the bridge was to be built in a single night, and finished before cock-crow; the price demanded was a human soul. But as dawn approached, and the bridge was almost finished, the unhappy mason, turning his lantern from side to side to watch with dismay the nearly completed fabric, sent a ray of light into a poultry-yard close by. Immediately the cock, who evidently took it for the first streak of dawn, crew loudly, and the devil, enraged, flew away, leaving one stone wanting to the bridge, a stone which no human power has ever been able to set in its place, even by bands of iron!

Terribly "restored" and modernised, the ancient bridge is still beautiful, and yet bears on one of its piles a votive inscription to Belisama—the name given by the Gauls to the Roman goddess Minerva. St. Dominic has often passed across it, and no stranger will cross it to-day without stopping to lean over the parapet to watch the raging chaos of waters below, where the clear green water of the rapids churn themselves into snowy foam upon the shelving rocks with a noise like thunder. Here, too, came Simon de Montfort in 1212, on a punitive expedition against the Count de Comminges, who had grievously ravaged his domains and repeatedly broken his faith. In those days the strong fortifications of St. Lizier had already been laid in ruins. Traces of them still exist above the old Cathedral, which was in the borough. Even in 1130 it was a crime against antiquity, for the ramparts were pre-Merovingian, of great architectural beauty, studded with twelve crenellated towers, which, however, mostly escaped destruction.

Above the old brown watch-tower, close to the bridge—a tower built about 1213 by a certain Vital de Montégut, who there threatened to cut off the head of his Bishop, Navarre, for protesting against a gross breach of faith on his part; a tower

[1] The legends concerning the cheating of the devil are perhaps more numerous in Germany than in France. The marvellous story of the Wolf of Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen) will be remembered by many.

which, if one may be allowed to speak from personal experience, is haunted to-day in a peculiarly terrible manner—above the clustering houses of the little town, climbing the hill tier upon tier, rises among the trees the octagonal tower of the old brown Cathedral of St. Lizier; and higher, to the left, the mass of the seventeenth century Episcopal palace, and the little Cathedral of our Lady of the Chair, built upon the ancient fortifications. The steep, winding streets—some mere stone stairways—in one of which, *La Chaussée*, are the remains of a fine Roman pavement; the beautiful timbered houses, with their picturesque carved galleries and cool, arched, open storeys, built in many cases upon the Roman walls scored with narrow loopholes—most of these St. Dominic has seen. Except the wide *Place* in front of the Cathedral, there is scarcely a yard of comparatively level ground in all St. Lizier. Long vine-branches trail over the crumbling brown walls from the hidden gardens behind; before many of the old houses stand, in painted wooden tubs, stately oleanders, lofty spires of delicate rose and creamy white, almost as beautiful as those of Venice, scenting the summer air. In the *Chaussée* stood the "*Hôtel des Ambassadeurs*,"—ambassadors to Our Lady in mediæval days, when the neighbouring towns yearly sent their chief magistrates on pilgrimage to the celebrated shrine of Our Lady of Marsan, just outside St. Lizier—a practice dating from the tenth century. In the house prepared for their reception each town hung a votive picture illustrating the benefits it had received through the intercession of Our Lady, and the whole mansion was beautifully decorated with commemorative frescoes. The very beds, we read, had painted *ciels*.[1] The hot persecution carried on by the Albigenses brought the pilgrimage to a close, and in the fifteenth century the Hôtel was converted into a hospital by the good Bishop of St. Lizier, Hector d'Ossun, the approval of Pope St. Pius V. being given in 1568.

The view from the ramparts at the top of the hill is glorious.

[1] The silken or brocade "roof" of a four-post bedstead.

All around, the fertile country, richly wooded (unlike in this the Plain of Languedoc), stretches for miles; threaded by the silver chain of the beautiful river; shut off from Spain by the titanic wall of the Pyrenees, whose purple, snow-capped peaks rise, stately and splendid, on the near southern horizon, patched with pinewoods, elusive with cloud shadows. Most fair, most serene, is this corner of old Guienne, a region rich in ancient, unvisited cities, in heroes, in Saints; a part of St. Dominic's country very dear to his heart.

The old Cathedral of St. Lizier is full of memories of our Saint, as well as of architectural interest. Here is preserved the beautiful crosier of twelfth century workmanship, which, had he accepted the bishopric, would have been used by him. This crosier is exceptionally interesting in that the upper part, of Norwegian work, is carved from a walrus-tusk, and probably dates from a much earlier age than the rest of the staff. Is it a relic of the Northern invasion left behind by the Arian Visigoths? What is certain is that St. Dominic has seen, and doubtless handled this most precious possession of the Treasury of St. Lizier. Round the staff runs the inscription: "*Honor. Onus. Cum Iratus Fueris, Misericordiæ Recordaberis.*" Here, too, is a fine reliquary-bust of St. Lizier, of French and Spanish work of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, magnificently jewelled.

In the sacristy is a curious masked entrance to the pulpit. A few wooden steps lead up to a great picture on the wall—the self-painted portrait of a seventeenth-century Carthusian bishop—which opens like a door when a spring is touched in the frame, and reveals the pulpit, which overhangs the unusually dark nave. There are no aisles; the Cathedral is lighted by very small windows above lateral chapels. The choir and wide transepts, in one of which are traces of curious and beautiful ancient frescoes, anterior to the time of St. Dominic, probably date from the eleventh century.

A door opens in the darkness of the south transept, and one is dazzled for a moment by the brilliant sunshine which

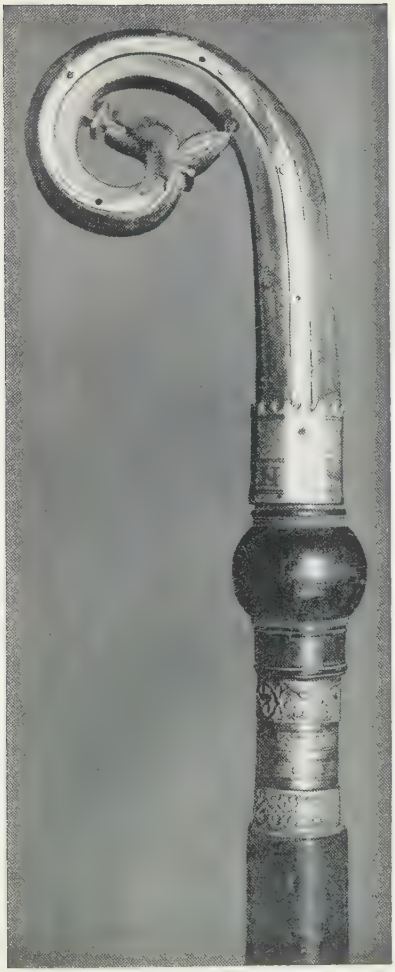

Photo: M. Malfilatre, St. Lizier

CROSIER (twelfth century); UPPER PART FORMED OF NARWHAL'S TUSK; NORWEGIAN WORK. IN THE TREASURY OF THE CATHEDRAL, ST. LIZIER

bathes a square grass plot seen through a vista of slender pillars and round-headed Roman arches. This is the famous Cloister of St. Lizier, where St. Dominic loved to walk and pray and meditate. A second cloister above the first has since been added, the "Canons' Cloister," in the days when St. Lizier with its two Cathedrals possessed a Chapter and Chapter-house, but otherwise it is unchanged.

The graceful pillars, arranged with symmetrical irregularity, singly or in groups of two or four, are crowned by curiously carved Roman capitals, no two of which are alike, but which all so strongly resemble those in the crypt of glorious St. Sernin at Toulouse that they are possibly the work of the same artist. The Cloister is small—there are only thirty-two bays in the enclosure—but it is architecturally perfect; a little carved jewel in this wonderful southern country of magnificent Roman cloisters, of which without doubt the most supremely beautiful example is that of the Cathedral of St. Trophimus, at Arles.

A cloister is always, as is fitting and proper, an abode of peace, of shade and sunshine, but somehow the little arcaded quadrangle of St. Lizier possesses these qualities of peace and silence in a special degree. At one side of the grass plot a lofty white statue of the Mother of God smiles across the sunlit spaces; against the walls, once covered with frescoes of which traces still remain, are the carved tombs of two mediæval bishops. Leaning against a pillar in a shady angle it is easy to imagine the figure of St. Dominic as Fra Angelico painted him, pacing silently up and down with bowed head, meditating—as he must have meditated here—upon the work which was to crown his apostolate, the foundation of his Friars Preachers at Toulouse. Just so, wrapt in thought, he must have paced those other Roman Cloisters of St. John Lateran, when, a year or two later, he journeyed to the Eternal City to obtain the confirmation of his Rule from Pope Innocent—the Cloisters where in spring the violets grow thick around the old carved marble well-head in the midst of the enclosure, the cloisters which must have reminded him of the

peace of those of St. Lizier, which in so many ways they resemble.

Many other things there are to interest the pilgrim in this little brown forgotten city with its ruined ramparts and donjon towers. There are quaint, winding streets to be explored, picturesque old timbered houses to sketch; a mile or two across the pleasant fields rises the curious church of Montjoie, its crenellated façade crowned by three pointed *tourelles*, between which swing, each in its round-headed arch, a couple of great bells, after the manner of the fortified churches of the Midi. Still more interesting is the once famous pilgrimage of *Notre Dame de Marsan*, at whose shrine St. Dominic has certainly knelt; a very celebrated "Black Madonna" of mediæval days, whose little chapel, built upon the site of a Roman temple to Mars, is yet a centre of devotion for all the country round, and whose wooden statue, throned above the High Altar, battered and time-worn, has a strange dignity and charm. The public pilgrimages to this shrine attained their greatest importance during the years when the Black Death ravaged Europe, and the decimated populations turned for help to our Lady, *Salus Infirmorum*—the title by which she is venerated at Marsan. In 1773 St. Benedict Labre, on his way to St. James of Compostella, came to pray before our Lady of Marsan; probably the last of the many canonised saints who have knelt here.

But the very centre and heart of St. Lizier is its Cathedral. Here one returns instinctively again and again, passing through the shadows of the dark nave into the Divine peace of the ancient Cloister, fragrant with memories of him who refused to make his home in this abode of silence and prayer in order to mix with the world of ignorance in the scattered villages, of vice in the great towns, of heresy everywhere, that he might win souls for Christ; who refused not once nor twice the mitre of a bishop that he might wear in poverty and humility the white hood of a Preaching Friar, and—though this he knew not—in Heaven, the crown of a Saint.

Photo: M. Malfeuvre, St. Lizier.

THE CLOISTERS OF ST. LIZIER

XX

HOW THE FRIARS CAME TO TOULOUSE

The history of Toulouse stretches back into the ages which preceded the Christian era. Long before the conquest of Gaul by the Romans, it shared with Narbonne the honour of being one of the two chief cities of the Volscian kingdom; and though Narbonne, as a well-known port, claimed the supremacy, and was not only the Volscian capital, but later on that of the great Roman province known as the Narbonnais, Toulouse was almost equally important.[1] "From the time of Augustus the town became one of the intellectual centres of Gaul, whilst its commerce increased and prospered greatly, thanks to its situation between the two seas and its nearness to Spain." At the close of the first century it was the "Palladian city" of Martial, and had become Romanised even more thoroughly than its southern rival on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The Toulousains have always been distinguished for a certain adaptability to environment, and the city had gained too much from the Roman dominion to wish to shake it off, even when the mighty Empire of the West seemed tottering on its base and hordes of fierce barbarians—Suabians, Alans, Vandals—swarmed across Rhine and Rhone, devastating the Narbonnais like locusts; and finally for the greater part settling in Spain, whence one Roman usurper after another vainly endeavoured to dislodge them. These usurpers were a greater source of danger to the Emperor than the barbarians themselves; and it was chiefly to subdue them, and ensure

[1] Until 1317 the see of Toulouse was dependent upon that of the archdiocese of Narbonne.

his own dominion, that the unhappy Theodosius, after the first sack of Rome in 410 A.D. by the Visigoths, made a truce with Ataulphus, their chief, the successor of Alaric, who offered himself to the Emperor as his protector.

The Visigoths poured into the South of France as allies of the Romans; speedily reduced the Narbonnais, Aquitaine, and the other principal colonies, which their leader occupied with his own troops, now federated soldiers of the Empire. Those cities which held out were besieged, conquered, and in some cases almost destroyed. The more important, like Carcassonne, were strongly garrisoned. Ataulphus passed into Spain, where in 415 both he and his successor were assassinated, though the Visigoths were successful in reducing or exterminating the barbarians already in possession. "In return for their services they received from Honorius in 419 that part of Southern Gaul which lies between the Garonne, the ocean, and the Pyrenees. Toulouse was the capital of the new kingdom."

The Visigoths, who were by this time more or less civilised, and who greatly admired Roman methods, both military and legislative, were perhaps the finest race of barbarians which swept over the Alps into France and Italy and completely altered the map of Europe. To all intents and purposes the Western Empire had now ceased to exist. They settled, a wild, fierce Arian race, upon the Gallo-Roman cities of the South, where Christianity had long been preached, but while the Southern nations grew stronger and more hardy through the infusion of Northern blood, the floodgates of persecution were opened, and for a time it seemed as if the Church in Gaul must be overwhelmed by the rushing tide of Arianism. Hundreds of nameless martyrs in the Narbonnais shed their blood for their faith, among them the holy maidens of Mas Stes. Puelles. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the province never really recovered from this inundation of one of the deadliest heresies known to the Church. One may go further, and insist that the earlier heresy prepared the ground in which the poisonous doctrines of the Albigenses flourished

a few centuries later; that in a sense, Arius was in the Toulousain the precursor of Manes.

Politically, however, Toulouse grew and prospered greatly. During the latter half of the fifth century it was capital of all the country between the Loire and what is now known as the Rock of Gibraltar. Its laws and municipal privileges were still those of the Romans; it was a real centre of civilisation.

It is impossible to describe in detail the subsequent fascinating history of this celebrated town, some slight knowledge of which is really necessary if we would grasp the position of affairs, and the importance of the city, the Key of the Midi, at the coming of the Friars. Seized by Clovis in 508, after his conquest of the Visigoths, Toulouse became part of the kingdom of the Franks, and after (in 730) incurring the terrible peril of a Saracenic occupation, was finally by Charlemagne declared capital of the second kingdom of Aquitaine (781) and united to the Crown of France. It was at the beginning of the tenth century that the Counts of Toulouse, profiting by the weak-kneed policy of Charles the Simple, contrived to render themselves almost independent of their King, and the city became "the capital of an actual state, that of Southern France, as opposed to that of the North," whose capital was Paris.

This fact is one of the hinges on which turned the fortunes of the Crusade, for the authority of the French king being merely a shadow in the South, it had been found impossible, as we have seen, to gain the direct interference of that astute politician Philip Augustus in the Catholic cause. This interference would have thrown all the weight of the North into the scale, and almost certainly have ended in a huge and disastrous civil war, for men like Raymond of Toulouse were not fighting for their religious belief, but for nothing less than their temporal possessions. As in order to retain these they were obliged at least to call themselves Catholics, they did not hesitate to shelter behind the name, while working with all their power against the authority of the Church.

Their policy seemed to triumph for a time. Though De

Montfort entered Toulouse after the battle of Muret, and again in 1215, the city always turned again to Raymond, and three years later, on the day after the Feast of St. John the Baptist 1218, De Montfort was struck in the forehead by a stone aimed from the ramparts during his third siege of the city, and died in a few moments.

He was hearing Mass when messenger after messenger rushed in to beg him to leave the church and hasten to repel a sudden sortie of the Toulousains. "I will not go," he said, "before I have seen my Redeemer." Then, as the priest raised the Body of Christ, the hero, falling on his knees and raising his hands to Heaven, cried: "*Nunc dimittis servum Tuum, Domine, secundum verbum Tuum in pacem, Quia viderunt oculi mei Salutare Tuum.*"[1] Then rising he said to those around him: "Now let us go, and die if it may be, for Him who died for us!" Scarcely had he arrived in the thick of the fight when a stone, launched from a *mangonneau* upon the walls, "struck the soldier of Christ on the head, who, thrown to the ground and mortally smitten, touched his heart twice, recommending his soul to our Blessed Lady. Thus, like St. Stephen in his death, and stoned in the city of Stephen,[2] he fell asleep."

So died this true knight; so passed away one of the grandest figures of Christian chivalry in the Middle Ages, whom two countries may well be proud to claim.[3] So great was the prestige of his name and heroism, so far-reaching his personal influence, that the work he had so painfully, so gloriously achieved seem to fall to pieces when he was no longer there to direct it. It was just one of those cases in which, whatever may be said to the contrary, the loss of a great leader is absolutely fatal to the success of the cause. There are those whom it is impossible to replace. The

[1] "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

[2] The Cathedral of Toulouse is dedicated to St. Stephen, proto-martyr.

[3] His body was removed from St. Nazaire, Carcassonne, where it had received temporary burial, and interred in the Monastery of the monks of Fontevrault at Hautes-Bruyères, in the Ile de France, his native province,

changing, shifting nature of the Crusaders' army has already been described—it was never three months the same. The magic, not merely of the name of De Montfort, but of his magnetic personality and magnificent generalship, was literally necessary to combine, to hold, to inspire, and to lead to victory the inchoate though enthusiastic body of men of which he was the head. For this task his excellent and well-meaning son Amaury was incompetent, and he was wise enough to realise the fact. The siege of Toulouse was raised; the Crusaders retreated; Amaury shortly after yielded all his fathers' possessions to the King of France. Though Raymond VII., the last of his family in the male line, succeeded in repossessing himself of much that Raymond VI. had lost, he was himself forced in 1229, by the Treaty of Paris, to affiance his daughter and sole heiress, Jeanne, to Prince Alphonse of Poitiers, brother of St. Louis; and on the death of Alphonse in 1271 Toulouse was reunited to the Crown of France.

Thus, by a policy of masterly inaction, Philip Augustus had secured for his heirs the whole of that fair region of the South which had so long formed, to all intents and purposes, a second kingdom. The only person who eventually profited —politically—by the Crusade was the man who by rights should have headed it—an honour which he seven times refused—the King of France.

De Montfort's irreparable loss, at a moment when his noble work was but half-finished, was the death-blow to the Crusade as far as organised fighting was concerned, as far as any hope could be entertained of stamping out Manichæism by force. Had enough blood been shed? The sword of vengeance had been drawn for nine years; thousands had perished on both sides. Still, though checked, the deadly heresy was not destroyed; if driven nominally from the chief towns it lingered in the woods and mountains, in the strong-holds and hill-villages, ready so soon as the sword should be sheathed to break forth and cover the land once more. Yet God, in His inscrutable wisdom, removed at the most critical moment the hero who wielded that sword—the only

man indeed capable of wielding it! Was the Crusade, then, to be abandoned? Were the lost sheep to be left to perish? The answer to this question is the story of the foundation of the First Order of St. Dominic.

Perhaps one of the last pictures which flashed through the brain of the dying hero outside the walls of Toulouse was that of the new convent of St. Romain, whence the group of white-robed Friars who had been established there a couple of years earlier was already scattered abroad, the advance-guard of a great army. Not in vain had he cried: *Nunc Dimittis*. Here were the men who should carry on his work; here were the true Crusaders, and Dominic was their leader! "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Ever since that wonderful July night ten years earlier, when on the hill of Fanjeaux the Sign of God had been given to Dominic in fire; ever since the birth of the humble convent of Prouille, where the little company of his brethren had grown up beside the enclosed garden in which the white-robed nuns watched and fasted and prayed, the vision of his double Order had been present to his spirit. There should be men to work and women to suffer; priests with hearts on fire with zeal and tongues of flame to preach, to melt the hearts of sinners, to enlighten those that sat in darkness; nuns who in the unbroken silence of their cloister should storm Heaven with and for their brethren, by ceaseless penance, by perpetual intercession, by hidden lives of unutterable renunciation. This perfect ideal, this mystical co-operation of the active and passive life, the vision of this glorious family had been revealed to its Father and Founder in the Mount.

More than half of his desire had been fulfilled. Prouille, ten years after its foundation, was a growing and flourishing community wherein many souls had already found a harbour of salvation. His family of Preachers was also increasing,

though more slowly. He who never, we are told, travelled alone, had always at least one companion with him on his continual missionary journeys; the others so far had been chiefly employed in safeguarding, under St. Dominic's direction, the temporal interests of the convent, continually threatened not only by its enemies, but by those who should have been its friends. Thus for ten years Dominic, with holy prudence, waited silently on God to know what His will should be as to His Preachers; how their apostolate should be begun, when the new foundation should be made, and where.

The last question answered itself. Toulouse was the capital of Languedoc, and by far the most important town of those provinces of the Midi which to every Dominican must in a special sense be pre-eminently "St. Dominic's Country." It was, then, at Toulouse, the chief seat of learning in the South of France, that his Order, whose members themselves were to be learned, which was to inaugurate a new era in philosophy and scholarship, must be established; at Toulouse, nominally Catholic, politically faithless; torn between her allegiance to Raymond, to whom temporarily she owed so much, and her allegiance to the ancient Faith, to which she owed still more!

Between the years 1205–1215, Dominic had scarcely visited Toulouse, "the access to which city had been in fact denied to him by the heretics." Yet it was specially dear to him by the memory of the first conversion he had wrought in France. From that moment, remarks Bernard Gui, the idea of "instituting for the salvation of sinners an Order of Preachers, and of consecrating them for the evangelisation of the nations," grew silently in Dominic's heart. Indeed, it was not long afterwards that his first companions became "attracted towards him." For a dozen years the idea gained strength, like a bulb hidden in the earth, until the day when it was possible at last to realise his life's work; when the green leaves first appeared above ground, sheltering the stem upon which at last were to bloom the fair white lilies of St. Dominic.

It was after the Council of Montpellier, in January 1215, when Simon de Montfort had been declared by Pietro di Benevento the Papal envoy, five Archbishops, seventy-eight Bishops, and a large number of barons assembled in the great Catholic city, Count of Toulouse and Carcassonne, Viscount of Narbonne, and ruler for the Church of all the other lands and cities conquered by him during his long and arduous campaign, that the supreme moment came. Toulouse yielded completely, for the first time, and opened her gates to Foulques, her Bishop, who was constituted guardian of the city in the name of Innocent III. The hour had struck; the way was made plain. St. Dominic, who knew so well how to wait, knew equally well when to act. He came to Toulouse without loss of time. The first trace of his presence there we find in the story[1] of his clemency to a condemned heretic, a story too beautiful to be passed over.

The Saint, who had received from the Cardinal-Legate the faculties which empowered him to act as an ecclesiastical judge, was called upon to exercise this function upon a group of obstinate Albigenses, who had refused to renounce their errors and were on trial for their lives. "After a serious examination, he . . . declared them formally to be heretics. They were then exhorted to return to the Catholic Faith. They refused obstinately, and, hardened and impenitent, they were handed over to the secular arm, which condemned them to death by fire. But at the moment when these men were being led away, Dominic fixed his eyes on one of them, and as if he saw on his forehead the light of a Divine predestination, cried: 'Keep this man apart, and do not burn him with the others.' Then, turning towards the heretic he said with gentle kindness: 'I know, my son, that in the end, though not for a long time, you will become a good and holy man.'" Twenty years after, Raymond Gros, who had persevered in his heresy in Toulouse, where he was a well-known *Parfait*, presented himself at the door of the convent of the Friars Preachers. The hour of the Divine Mercy had struck; he

[1] Told at length by P. Balme, *Cartulaire de St. Dominique*, I. pp. 488–496.

offered himself to the Prior—that same Peter Seila who "received the Order into his house"—"without being called or cited, to do in everything the will of the brethren." He was welcomed with joy, took the habit of the Order, became a holy and zealous religious, and died in the Convent of St. Romain after long years of penitence and reparation.

It may be well to add that this is literally the only recorded occasion on which St. Dominic was directly concerned with the burning of a heretic.

So far, if we except the convent buildings of Prouille and the little cottage at Fanjeaux, where he lived on first coming to the town, St. Dominic had no house to call his own. When he travelled he begged shelter and hospitality for the night for himself and his companion; though he refused even when ill and suffering to sleep upon a bed, but lay upon the bare ground. His single meal, we learn from one who had often ministered to him, never exceeded a couple of eggs or the quarter of a fish, with a crust of bread and a cup of water coloured with wine. It was thus he lived when he came to Toulouse in 1214, but what was possible for two men—one of whom was a Saint—was not possible for his whole company of Preachers. The next step towards the realisation of his dream was to provide a house to shelter them.

There were then living in the city two brothers, Bernard and Peter Seila, sons of a rich merchant, who had inherited from their father great possessions in money, houses, and land. Shortly after St. Dominic's arrival in Toulouse Peter Seila offered him, for himself and his companions, a house close to the Narbonne Gate, adding to the gift the offering of himself and such of his possessions as "Dominic the servant of God" might judge fitting for the foundation of the Order. So simply and easily when the time came was the great design accomplished. Bernard remained in the world to perpetuate the family name, retaining the greater part of the brothers' inheritance; Peter, with his house and such furnishings as were necessary—but no revenues—joined the company of

Preachers. "It was not the Order which received me," he loved to say years later, as founder and first Prior of the Convent of Limoges, "but I who received the Order into my house."

This house, to be later known as the "House of the Inquisition," is to-day occupied by the Archbishop of Toulouse. It has a most interesting history. Though in the following year (1216) Foulques gave to the Order the little Priory and church of St. Romain,[1] and a wealthy citizen, Raymond Vital, with his wife, bestowed on St. Dominic a house[2] close to his new abode, in what is still called the *Rue St. Rome*, some of the Friars still lived in the house of Peter Seila until 1230. In that year was founded what is perhaps the most beautiful Dominican church ever built, one of the chief glories of Toulouse, that city of magnificent ecclesiastical buildings. It was not finished till 1285, but on the Sunday before Christmas, 1230, "with extraordinary pomp," the Friars

[1] "*Dedit fratri Dominico, Priori et Magistro Prædicatorum, sociis præsentibus et futuris, capellam Sti. Romani*" (extract from Cathedral archives). The Bishop also gave them two other churches in his diocese, Ste. Marie de Lescure (or Lescout), between Sorèze and Puy Laurens, and another church at Pamiers. These, however, were never occupied by the Friars, says B. Jordan.

[2] They also bestowed a vineyard on St. Dominic, and as the house which they offered was too small to accommodate all the Friars—in 1216 there were 16—Fr. Bertrand, Prior of St. Romain, exchanged this vineyard for a second house adjoining the first, with its proprietor, Vital Autard, together with the eighth part of a mill situated at the barrier of N. D. de la Daurade, the gift of a third citizen, Thomas de Tramesaygues. Raymond Vital had been Consul of Toulouse. (See Balme, *Cartulaire II.*, pp. 60–66.) It was necessary to re-arrange the two houses thus acquired, and to build cells for the religious. These, by St. Dominic's orders, were constructed "as they should henceforth be built by the whole Order. Considering that the ancient Fathers had cells only 4 feet wide, only a little longer than was necessary to lie down at full length, the Saint, after their example, ordered similar cells to be erected, separated by a partition which, at the head of the bed, should not be so high as to prevent each Friar from being visible to those who passed through the dormitory. And because the ancient Fathers slept on mats he ordained that his Friars should sleep on straw (*super stramina*). He, however, permitted the cells to be 6 feet long, in order that a table might be placed in each for study, but cell and table must be of common materials. . . . Finally, he ordained that there should be no hangings, nor door, nor any sort of enclosure, but that in each cell should be placed a crucifix, so that the friar could from his bed fix his heart and eyes upon the Lord from whom cometh Salvation" (Balme, *ut supra*, quoting Galvano Fiamma, O.P., fourteenth century). St. Dominic's action with regard to the cells in the monastery of Bologna, which he considered too luxurious, will be remembered.

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

THE ANCIENT "HOUSE OF THE INQUISITION" (X), TOULOUSE
(From a very old print kindly lent by M. l'Abbé Vielle)

were installed in their new abode. They did not, however, give up the house of Peter Seila. In 1233, the Pope placed the direction of the Roman Inquisition in the hands of the Dominican Order, and their first home became its headquarters, being henceforth known as the "House of the Inquisition." It gave its name to the street in which it was situated, which leads from the ancient Gate of St. Michael to that of St. Clare, and stands on the left hand as one enters the city. In 1794 the names of the streets were changed, and the *Rue de l'Inquisition* became the *Rue de la Tolérance!* But until comparatively recent years the old inscription remained over the door: "*Domus Inquisitionis.*"

Within the entrance court was a church, which was not completed, or at least decorated, till the seventeenth century, and beyond were the cells of the religious and those of the prisoners. Here, too, was the "throne-room," for the Inquisitor-General was the King's officer, and sat here as his legal representative.[1] All this existed in 1846, though many of the most interesting features have since disappeared. Though it had ceased to be the Dominican headquarters, two Friars came to sleep here every night, in order to establish the claim of the Order on the building. But in 1764, to what must be the undying regret of every Dominican heart, the house of Peter Seila was sold to a citizen of Toulouse named Combes, and it seems to have remained private property after the Revolution, until about 1850 the Society of Jesus was established here. When the Jesuits were driven from France the house became a convent of the Congregation of *Marie Réparatrice*, and when in their turn the nuns were expelled it was acquired by the Archbishop of Toulouse, who now resides there.[2]

[1] The sittings of the Court had almost been given up when the Roman Inquisition was revived by Pope Paul III. in 1543. Catel refers to a Dominican doctor in theology who "lodged in the said house of the Inquisition."

[2] A number of local details in this chapter have been personally furnished by the very Rev. Fr. H. A. Montagne, O.P., of the Toulouse Province, Professor of the University of Fribourg, and Editor of the *Révue Thomiste.* Much valuable information has also been kindly given by M. l'Abbé Vielle, Curé of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Toulouse.

St. Dominic's cell, which still exists, can be seen by the courtesy of the Archbishop's secretary. The bench of broken masonry, like the ridge of a low wall, which served him as seat and bed, yet remains in one corner of what has been for many centuries a private chapel, like that other cell of his at Santa Sabina. Here, says an old writer who had many times said Mass there, "with great and increasing devotion," the Saint "mingled his blood with that of the crucified." An old picture over the altar represents him thus, discipline in hand. There is just one reflection as to this historic house which may console us for its loss: had it not passed from the Order when it did it would certainly have been stolen from it thirty years later at the Revolution, and probably destroyed. Now, at least, it is in safe keeping!

In the court grew a fig-tree, planted by St. Dominic, which, like the more celebrated orange-tree of Santa Sabina, lived and flourished from century to century, and which even when the trunk decayed, grew again from the roots.

Of the church and first actual monastery in the *Rue St. Rome* there is no trace at all. The street opens out of the vast *Capitôle*,[1] which may be called the heart and centre of Toulouse, and runs due south—a typical old Toulousain street, narrow, winding, lined with small shops, most of which have overhanging upper storeys. Between the shops open dark stone-paved alleys, whose gloomy houses and walls almost meet high overhead, as mysterious, if not as lofty as Venetian *Calli*.[2] But there is nothing left of the little old church of St. Romain and the house of Raymond Vital where St. Dominic made his second foundation. One passes the site in wandering down the little, noisy, crowded *Rue St. Rome*—the site, and that is all. And even the site cannot be definitely fixed.

The third and final home of the Friars in Toulouse until the

[1] A large square, site of the ancient Roman Capitol. [2] Lanes.

Revolution was the magnificent church and monastery to which reference has already been made, which vied with the scarcely less splendid church of the Cordeliers or Friars Minor, founded in 1222, and in which (less than ten years after the foundation in Toulouse of the Friars Preachers) St. Antony of Padua "taught, and wrought miracles both before and after his death." In 1230 a rich citizen of Toulouse, Pons de Capdenier and his wife nearly lost their only daughter by a dangerous illness, and made a joint vow that should she recover they would offer the greater part of their wealth to Almighty God. The child did recover, and her parents, with the approval of Bishop Foulques, bought a site in the parish of La Daurade known as the *Jardin des Garrigues*, which they presented to the Dominicans, and on which was built, greatly at their expense, the historic church at first dedicated to St. Dominic, a title changed to that of St. Thomas Aquinas when in 1369 the relics of that Saint were translated to Toulouse; a church which has more than once been imitated, as at Paris and Agen, but never rivalled. On 22nd October 1292 it was solemnly consecrated by the Carmelite Archbishop of Lesbos in the presence of a crowd of prelates and dignitaries and an enormous gathering of the faithful. Already the Order had become enormously popular in Toulouse. "No one could refuse anything to God and the Brothers," says a modern writer, who elsewhere declares: "That which above all charms us, in St. Francis of Assisi as in St. Dominic, is that they added to the beauty of the world." [1]

Especially is this true of the Dominican churches of the world, always remarkable in mediæval days for their grand and stately architecture. If we needed to go beyond France to prove this assertion, one might name at hazard Santa Maria Novella at Florence, San Giovanni e Paolo at Venice, and the glorious pile of San Domenico at Siena. But for exquisite pure Gothic, with its soaring lines and slender pillars like the stems of palm-trees, the severe simplicity of its marvellous

[1] L. Gillet, "*Histoire Artistique des Ordres Mendiants*," Paris, 1912.

vaulting, the Jacobin[1] church at Toulouse has never been surpassed. "It is one of the perfect jewels of France. . . . The choir, where the double vault melts into one, where fourteen shafts meet upon a central pillar, or rather rise from it . . . like the fronds of a palm-tree—this choir is a treasure on which the eye is never weary of gazing."

Toulouse had a school of architecture of its own, particularly remarkable for the use which was made of brick, even in the most magnificent buildings; perhaps a tradition handed down from Roman and Visigothic days. The new church was built almost entirely of the beautiful deep red Toulousain brick, which takes on with age the richest and most mellow tints of brown and crimson madder, a colour which here and there can only be compared to that of ripe mulberries. It was built with two naves,[2] a plan followed later by the architects of other Dominican churches. Its most remarkable feature is the single row of seven lofty white pillars running down the centre of its great length, and supporting a roof whose beauty lies in its severe perfection of line, and the curious and exquisite colour contrast between the deep crimson of its shafts and its white vaulting.[3] Later on, chapels, now destroyed, were added on either side of the church, which was lighted by pointed windows over 50 feet in height—that of the church itself, from floor to the crown of the vaulting was about 180 feet —whose delicate tracery was filled with superb painted glass.

Conspicuous in the church was the splendid tomb of Raymond de Felgar, the successor of Foulques, Dominican Bishop of Toulouse, 1232–70, who here celebrated the Feast of St. Dominic's canonisation in 1233. Here, too, slept the Inquisitors martyred by the Albigenses in 1242. But the chief

[1] The word "*Jacobin*," often applied to Dominicans as well as to their churches in France, was originally derived from the chapel of St. Jacques in Paris, where the Friars made their first foundation in that city, and where they were generally known among the people as *Jacobins*.

[2] The object of the double nave has been much discussed. Probably one (the inner) was for the religious, the other for the faithful. The whole congregation could thus see the High Altar.

[3] It was a transition from the Roman churches with single nave and two aisles to those of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries built as one finds them all over the Midi, with a vast single nave.

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Eckert, O.P.

THE DOMINICAN CHURCH, TOULOUSE
(Showing the original level of the floor)

glory of the church was the fact that it was the resting-place of the body of St. Thomas Aquinas, whose magnificent tomb in the nave, against each of the four faces of which there stood an altar, was a place of pilgrimage not only for all sons of St. Dominic, but for the faithful from all parts of the world.[1] As the centuries went on, the devotion of pilgrims and penitents made the great church a veritable treasure-house of splendour. Nothing was too good to be offered to the Jacobins of Toulouse.

The church formed one side of a great square, of which the monastery buildings made the other three; a square so large that a company of soldiers might manœuvre in it with ease. This was surrounded by a cloister, before whose unique and exquisite beauty even the only less lovely cloister of the Augustinians,[2] some half-mile distant, must pale and fade.

[1] It bore the following inscription:

"Hic Thomæ cineres positi cui fata dedere
Ingenium terris vivere, cœlo animam."

The relics of St. Thomas Aquinas were removed at the Revolution to the Basilica of St. Sernin, under the protection of the tricolour flag. Even the maddest revolutionaries did not dare to violate a building so sacred as this Basilica, which is believed to contain the largest and most valuable collection of authentic relics in the world. It was principally against the religious Orders and their monasteries that the fury of the mob was directed. The head of St. Thomas is preserved in a crystal reliquary in the crypt of St. Sernin, and is only exposed for public veneration during the Octave of Pentecost. His other relics have been placed in a *châsse* over a neighbouring altar in the chapel of the Holy Ghost, one of those in the *Corona* behind the Choir. Quite apart from its enthralling interest to a Dominican pilgrim this vast Roman church should be visited, if only for the sake of its relics. In the marvellous crypt, whose beauty will sometimes make the visitor forget the treasures it enshrines, are parts of the bodies of no fewer than eight apostles (brought thither from the East by Charlemagne) and those of countless saints, martyrs, and bishops. One of its chief glories is a Thorn from the Holy Crown, and among its wonders may be seen a large piece of fine silk brocade, in which the Crown of Thorns was enwrapped when it was brought by Fr. André de Longjumeau, O.P., to St. Louis from Venice. By a curious coincidence the Byzantine design of this ancient material is almost exactly identical with that of one of the subjects in the mosaic pavement of San Marco, Venice. In 1217 Raymond of Toulouse actually held a "Council" in this church.

[2] The Augustinian monastery, desecrated at the Revolution, is to-day the Museum of Toulouse. The church is the principal hall of the picture-gallery, in which are a large number of altar-pieces (all by Toulousain artists, notably the celebrated Rivals) saved from the general destruction, particularly from the Cordelier church. Its lovely fifteenth century "great cloister," and the less remarkable "little cloister" of the seventeenth century now form part of the

It is as impossible, for want of space, even briefly to outline here the history of this remarkable church as to attempt to describe it worthily. Enough still remains of the original fabric to show what it must have been. What, then, is it to-day?

Ask any passer-by the way to Jacobin, or even the Dominican church, and the chances are that he will simply look puzzled, apologise politely, and say he does not know. Ask for the *Lycée* [1] and we shall be directed at once from the Capitôle, down the Rue Pargaminières, and told to take the second turning on the left. And there, in a labyrinth of small narrow streets, rise like a great cliff of red sandstone the mighty walls and noble octagonal tower of the great church which for over 600 years sheltered the sons of St. Dominic in the city of their first foundation—to-day the *Lycée* of Toulouse.

The *concierge* leads us through a dark passage, and opens a door at the west end of the building. Here, high in the wall, is one of the most ancient preaching pulpits in France—a niche with a balustrade in front of it. The great windows have been filled with masonry, for after the Revolution it was thought well to remove the glorious stained glass from the desecrated building to the Cathedral of St. Stephen. So clumsily was this done that the beautiful windows, with their rainbow hues, were all broken on the way. It not being considered necessary to renew the glass thus abstracted, the windows were roughly bricked up. Hideous round-topped

museum, and are lined with fragments of ancient sculpture and curious wooden statues, most of which were originally stolen from the churches at the Revolution. Its fine brick octagonal tower was copied from that of the Jacobins. The vast Cordelier church, after being unspeakably desecrated, was transformed (after an attempt to turn it into a two-storeyed building), into an army forage-store, and crammed with hay and straw. It perished in a fearful fire in 1870, arising, it is believed, from spontaneous combustion. Only the tower now remains, a lofty, solitary monument of the red Toulousain brick, standing in the yard of an iron-foundry to which all access is strictly forbidden. This church, too, possessed beautiful cloisters.

[1] The *Lycées* of France were established in the great towns by Napoleon I. to supply to the rising generation the education given in the countless Catholic schools and colleges which had been swept away at the Revolution. Paris had two or three. In the smaller towns "colleges" were founded, and the desecrated ecclesiastical buildings were found convenient for these institutions.

Photo: R. P. Rosaire Lebert, O.P.

ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE CLOISTER OF THE DOMINICAN CHURCH, TOULOUSE
(thirteenth century)

openings have been cut in this brickwork, to admit the light; the floor has been covered with earth,[1] and its level raised about 6 feet. This vast building is the ancient Dominican church of Toulouse—it also is, or was, the Chapel of the *Lycée*, which is established here in the old monastery buildings where St. Thomas taught, and in which thousands of St. Dominic's heroic sons have learnt to follow in their Father's footsteps. Latterly the French Government has been waking to a sense of its responsibilities in the possession of these architectural treasures—for this is but one of hundreds. Many are being "restored" at the public expense, among others, that in which we stand. In 1910 the excavation of the floor to its original level was begun, and the bases of the pillars are now laid bare. During this process a large quantity of human bones, doubtless from the tombs which once crowded the church, were dug up, and daily carted away—whither?[2]

Let us pass into the great cloister by the north door. Two sides of it have been entirely destroyed, and over the two long rows of slender double columns now remaining a temporary roof of wood and tiles has been erected. Exactly opposite the church door is that of the refectory, now a class-room.[3] Perhaps of all the sad sights within the desecrated building the piteous broken fragment of these perfect cloisters is the most heartrending.

This fine old Gothic doorway to the right opens into the Chapter-house, a long wide room once frescoed, with a recess opposite the door in which stood the altar. To-day this recess contains a sort of wooden platform, where are placed a table and a few chairs. There has been speechmaking, at a

[1] One of the first uses made of the empty church after the Revolution was to transform it into a stable for army horses. The stone floor was considered too damp for them, and its level was raised with beaten earth. More than one Exhibition has been held in the desecrated church, notably one about 1830, when by means of planks and beams the church was divided into two storeys. This was after it had been found too damp for the horses.

[2] The families of certain benefactors had a right to be buried here. The Friars were buried in the celebrated crypt. In the still more celebrated crypt of the Cordeliers the laity also could purchase a right to interment, but this was not the case with the Jacobins.

[3] The entrance to the *Lycée* is from without, not through the cloisters.

prizegiving here lately, we are told! There has also been some kind of a theatrical representation, for the floor of the chapel of St. Antoninus, which we enter next, opening out of the Chapter-house, is littered with "properties,"—gold paper, tinsel, and tawdry hangings. This chapel is an architectural gem. It was built in the early fourteenth century, and the upper tracery of its windows is like the uncurling of bracken-fronds, at once simple and intricate. It was decorated in fresco by the first Bishop of Pamiers in honour of St. Antoninus, patron of his city and see, and founder of the Abbey of St. Antonin de Frédélas. These fourteenth century frescoes have long been ruined by damp and neglect. The tall figures stare down at us from the peeling walls, through wreaths of cobwebs and layers of green mould, dust, and dirt, grim shadows of the past, grey, piteous wraiths imprisoned here, possessing yet a beauty which neither decay nor desecration can destroy. Beneath this chapel, from whose exquisite windows the painted glass has long since vanished, was the famous crypt, one of the wonders of Toulouse, which space remorselessly forbids our describing.

Think of the years, the centuries of labour and love and sacrifice, that went to the making of this glorious house of prayer, this magnificent temple of the Most High—one of the grandest houses of the Dominican Order in the world! Think of the martyrs and saints who have been buried here, of the hundreds of uncanonised saints who have lived here, of St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Vincent Ferrer, who have taught or preached here! Think of the uncounted thousands of times the Holy Sacrifice has been offered within those silent walls, of the rolling thunder of the Divine Office by night and day, of the magnificent Corpus Christi and Rosary processions, of the glorious midnight Masses of Christmas, throughout six centuries! Think of the innumerable multitude of Friars who lived on this very spot, and their six hundred years of prayer! Thinking of these things, gazing upon the poor, defaced, mutilated body from which the soul has fled, the eternal

question rises unbidden from the aching heart: *Why* . . . why have these things been permitted? Why have the heathen been permitted to ravage so fair an inheritance, to "break down its carved work with axes and hammers"? And there is no answer save the sublime cry of that faith which overcomes the world: "*Domine, Tu Scisti*"—"Oh Lord God, Thou knowest!"

When St. Dominic's orange-tree at Santa Sabina put forth its new shoot; when Henry Dominic Lacordaire restored the Order of Friars Preachers in France, the white habit was again seen in Toulouse. It must always be a matter of keen regret that Père Lacordaire could not see his way to accepting the offer of the Jacobin Church, made him by the government of the day, but for reasons of prudence he thought it necessary, under the circumstances, to decline. After all, it could only have been for fifty years!

St. Dominic's sons took up their abode in a building very near the House of the Inquisition in 1852, and here, with one short interval, they remained until they were expelled by the iniquitous law of 1901. The old chapel where Lacordaire had so often preached, with its curious double tribunes, was transformed into a refectory when in 1895 a large new chapel,[1] worthy of the tradition of the Order, was consecrated. Here Mass is still said—but not by a Dominican. For once more the precious grain planted in Toulouse, scattered from Prouille by the hand of St. Dominic, has been dispersed throughout the world, this time by the enemy, only to bring forth a hundredfold in a glorious harvest of souls.

It is impossible even to mention all the glories of the beautiful old city on the banks of the Garonne, here a

[1] This chapel was begun by the V. R. Hyacinthe M. Cormier, the present Master-General, then Prior of Toulouse, before the temporary expulsion of the Religious from France in 1880. The building was continued in 1889, three years after the return thither from Spain of the noviciate. Finished in 1890, it was consecrated five years later, but was only used by the Dominicans for eight years, being "closed" in 1903. It was reopened for public worship as the chapel of a *pensionnat* established in the convent buildings in 1907.

swift and splendid river. But there are labyrinths of ancient, crooked, winding streets, some crowded and noisy, some silent and grass-grown, all with curious old-world names—Toulouse is still in many ways delightfully mediæval! Here, too, are treasures of art and architecture—marvellous carved Renaissance mansions, picturesque bridges; above all, glorious churches—Notre Dame de la Dalbade,[1] whose slender red spire rises 300 feet into the air above a sea of roofs; Notre Dame de la Daurade, an old pilgrimage church with a miraculous Madonna, and a host of others. But a word must be said about the *Eglise du Taur*. The Church of the Bull is situated in the street of that name—a street fascinating with old book shops and antiquity stores, which leads from the *Capitôle* to St. Sernin. The church was built on the spot of the martyrdom of the first Bishop of Toulouse, St. Saturninus (Sernin), who, tradition tells us, was baptized by St. John the Baptist, was an eyewitness of the miracles of our Lord, and who beheld His Crucifixion, His appearances after His Resurrection, and His Ascension. St. Sernin came to Toulouse shortly after the day of Pentecost, in company with St. Papoul, after visiting Arles and Nîmes; and the relics of St. Cyriaca, the subject of his first miracle here, who was cured by baptism of leprosy, are still preserved in the Basilica which bears his name. After a long and arduous apostolate, illustrious by miracles in the country which twelve centuries later was again to be evangelised by St. Dominic, St. Saturninus fell a victim to the persecution stirred up against the Christians in Toulouse, in which St. Papoul had already laid down his life. The Bishop was tied by the feet to the horns of a great bull which was about to be sacrificed, and dragged by the furious animal down the steps of the Capitol, against which his skull was fractured. His lifeless body was drawn by the bull through the street still called the *Rue du Taur*,

[1] Where in 1210 took place the supernatural manifestation for fifteen days of a number of luminous crosses in the air, both inside and outside the church.

until, just on the spot where the church now stands, the cord broke, and two women, "more courageous than the men," rescued his relics and gave them secret burial. The "Church of the Bull," which was built over his remains, has existed from the first century, though rebuilt more than once. The sixth century church, which existed for over 1000 years, must have been well known to St. Dominic. Here he who had so burning a thirst for martyrdom must often have prayed on the spot where the martyr bishop who had seen his Lord in the flesh had yielded up his life.

At the end of the Rue du Taur opens the *Place* in which stands the grand Basilica of St. Sernin, founded in the fourth century, though the present fabric dates from the eleventh; since the destruction of St. Peter of Cluny, the largest and most magnificent Roman Basilica in the world. It has long possessed the most unrivalled collection of authentic relics in existence. In its splendid nave and shadowy aisles St. Dominic has often walked and prayed; here rest the relics of his glorious son, St. Thomas Aquinas.

The very curious Cathedral of St. Stephen is also of great antiquity. Tradition tells us that St. Martial, the first Bishop of Limoges, came to France fifteen days after the Ascension, that he visited Toulouse, and—the fact is recorded in very ancient documents—built a tiny church (on the site of the steeple of the present cathedral) in honour of St. Stephen, whom he had perhaps known as a friend. The preaching of St. Sernin filled this little church, and it became necessary to build a larger. After his martyrdom this was done. This legend is very well authenticated, but what can be proved is the fact that a church certainly existed here from the fourth century onwards. In the thirteenth century Raymond of Toulouse continued the often-interrupted building of the present Cathedral by erecting the nave, which is on a perfectly different plan from the fine choir, so that the interior of the building presents a startlingly one-sided appearance probably unique

in architecture. This church too is closely connected with St. Dominic, and with another of his most illustrious children. For here, in the great *Place* before the Cathedral, St. Vincent Ferrer preached that celebrated sermon upon the Last Judgment, when the square could not contain his congregation, so that the roofs of the houses were black with men, and breathless hearers hung on his words from every window. So deeply did his burning eloquence move the crowding thousands that the air was full of groans and cries of terror and repentance, that men fell senseless with fear upon the stones as this second St. Paul pictured the judgment to come.

The list might be continued indefinitely, for Toulouse is literally saturated with Dominican memories; its very stones wake and cry as one walks through the ancient streets or kneels in the historic churches. After Prouille and Fanjeaux, no place on earth—if we except Bologna—can appeal so strongly to the heart of every child of St. Dominic as his beloved city of Toulouse, in which his sons to-day are persecuted outcasts.

After having established his little company of six in the house of Peter Seila, with the approbation and assistance of Bishop Foulques, St. Dominic, in company with that prelate, turned his steps towards Rome. The foundation was only the first step. "High and powerful as was the approval . . . of the Bishop of Toulouse, it was not sufficient for an Order destined . . . to evangelise the world. The Pope alone, the Universal Pastor, had power to open the road to the nations by according to the Order his supreme sanction."[1] Leaving his flock to study theology under the care of Master Alexander Stavensby, a well-known English Doctor and Professor in the schools of Toulouse, to whom the new Order had already appeared in a dream as seven stars,[2] the Founder took up his staff once more, and reached Rome in October

[1] R. P. Mortier, *Histoire des Maîtres-Généraux*, ch. ii. p. 23.
[2] This beautiful story is too long and too well known for quotation.

1215, in time to assist at the Lateran Council, which opened a month later,[1] during which he hoped to obtain the formal confirmation of his Order. But it was not till after all was over that Pope Innocent III., who for eleven years had watched the apostolate of Dominic, and knew its value to the Church, beheld in a vision the Saint sustaining with his shoulders the trembling walls of the Lateran Basilica. He finally granted the desired authorisation, and, without giving any formal approbation, the Pope blessed the new Institute.

St. Dominic was sent back to Toulouse to consult with his brethren as to the rule they should henceforth adopt. He returned to his Preachers—now established at St. Romain—in time for the Easter festivities of 1216, and his joy may be imagined on finding ten new subjects added to their number. Eight of the sixteen were French, seven Spanish, one an Englishman. It was at Prouille that the historic meeting took place, in which, "with common accord, Dominic and his disciples chose as basis of their Institution the Rule of St. Augustine." Once more the indefatigable Founder journeyed to the Eternal City "to gain at last the Cause, which is that of Christ, of the Church and of Souls."

Ten years, almost to the day, after the foundation of Prouille, Pope Honorius II. "solemnly promulgated the approbation which he gave to the new Order, founded in the Church of St. Romain of Toulouse. . . . What Dominic does, what he wishes, the Pope knows and wishes it with him, and approves it day by day. The Order of Preachers[2] is as much the work of the Papacy as of Dominic. No other is more Roman."[3] The eighteen Cardinals present signed the historic Bull[4] after the Pope. The dream had become fact; the instrument so long, so passionately, desired was placed in Dominic's hands; it only remained to use it. His heart burning with joy, he hurried back to Toulouse, barefoot, "the precious Bull in his beggar's wallet."

[1] By this council the Albigensian heresy was formally condemned.
[2] The Order received this name by a Bull of Honorius III., 1217.
[3] R. P. Mortier, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
[4] The original is preserved in the archives of the city of Toulouse.

Once at St. Romain, his first act was one which appeared to men so strange, that even his wise and trusted friends, Foulques and De Montfort demurred, and begged him to reconsider his decision. For the Saint had but returned to his children to separate them, to scatter throughout the field of the world the seed he had but just garnered. By twos and threes he sent his little flock, all fearful of their new responsibility, with nothing but his blessing, into the distant capitals of Europe. "My Lords and Fathers," he replied to his two anxious friends, "do not oppose me. I know what I am doing." "Go," he said to his sons, "on foot, without money, without thought for the morrow, begging your bread. I promise you that, in spite of the sufferings of your poverty, what is necessary to you shall never be wanting."

Sublime Faith, magnificent Charity, which found an echo in the hearts of the Friars!

It was at Prouille, on the Feast of the Assumption, 1217, that the little band met for its final dispersion. The Friars wore the white habit and surplice of the Canons of St. Augustine, such as St. Dominic had always worn, for it was not till 1218 that the habit, through the vision of Blessed Reginald, assumed its present form. "A multitude of pilgrims gathered from all parts are present at the Holy Sacrifice . . . which Dominic offers himself. Then he receives again the Profession of the Brothers and Sisters, thoroughly to establish the unity of the double Order; and lastly, points out to his children the road which each must follow." Four were sent to Madrid; seven, among whom was Mannès, the Saint's brother, to Paris; two to Toulouse; two were to remain at Prouille. Fr. Etienne de Metz was chosen by Dominic as his own companion.

So, after the farewell embrace, they parted, walking barefoot in the lovely summer morning beneath the hill of the Signadou, through the fields white unto harvest, through the vineyards where the ripening grapes awaited the vintage; in all humility, in all obedience, in perfect confidence in God,

in His Blessed Mother, and in St. Dominic; the most sublime apostolic venture of Faith that the world has ever seen, or will see. . . .

And as they passed out of sight to north and south, Dominic, high on the Hill of Fanjeaux, prayed, shedding tears of thankfulness, at the Signadou. For he knew, and was persuaded, that those who now went out weeping, bearing precious seed, would return again with joy, bringing their sheaves with them.

XXI

THE RUINED CASTLES OF AUDE AND ARIÈGE

No pilgrimage in St. Dominic's country would be complete without at least a flying visit to some of its ruined castles, all of which were familiar by sight to our Saint during his countless journeyings through the provinces of Guienne and Languedoc. There is, moreover, proof presumptive that he visited, heedless of danger, several of them during his zealous apostolate, and it is quite possible, if not probable, that he was acquainted with all. So at least circumstantial evidence would lead us to believe, for of documents in proof we have none. But if his humility permitted no record to be kept of his strenuous exertions, we have contemporary testimony to the fact that no corner of this beautiful country was left unvisited by Dominic; no risk could deter him from seeking souls. And therefore it is in these very castles, the strongholds of heresy both literally and metaphorically, that we should expect to find traces of his presence, and doubtless should do so, had not their archives long been destroyed, were not the castles themselves to-day in almost every case mere frowning piles of crumbling ruins.

But whether, as strong and terrible they dominated the valleys in the thirteenth century, or merely, as in the twentieth, form a delightfully picturesque feature in the landscape, these castles are one of the chief characteristics of St. Dominic's country, and it is impossible to neglect them. Some of these, as Saissac and Servian, we have already visited; others, like those of Montréal, Pamiers, and Fanjeaux, have completely disappeared, leaving scarcely the traces of their foundations. But the more inaccessible, buried in the wildest solitudes,

perched on rocks so precipitous that storming was difficult and dangerous, and a sustained attack almost impossible, still exist; broken masses of grim grey wall growing, as it seems, out of the heart of the living rock. Scarcely anything can be more fascinating than a tour among these splendid relics of mediævalism, which open up to the archæologist and excavator almost boundless fields for exploration, and which appeal with equal force to the artist. Set invariably in the most attractive spots of a beautiful though wild and sometimes savage country, hardly anything can bring the past so vividly before our eyes as a pilgrimage to the ruined castles of St. Dominic's Country.

Some of them, such as the famous ruin of Montségur, were built by the heretics, when driven out of the towns, as places of refuge where they could practise their infamous cult in peace, but many, like the Castle of Foix—the only one, so far as I am aware, which is not at present more or less a ruin—were the dwelling-places of the ruling families, most of which had strong leanings to Albigensianism, and where *Parfaits* and their followers were always welcome. All, with scarcely an exception, became in the thirteenth century the last retreat of the heretics, whom it was a work of time, patience, and skilful generalship to dislodge.

Perhaps the best starting-point from which to visit most of these fine old ruins is Quillan—a place doubtless known to St. Dominic, though we have no record or tradition as to his passage here. It is a charming little town on the Aude, not far from Alet (the historic stronghold of Jansenism); girdled with glorious mountains, and possessed, for the comfort of the modern pilgrim, of several good hotels, an excellent automobile service to most of the places of interest within sixty miles—including Mont-Louis, almost on the Spanish frontier—and a station on the line running directly to Perpignan from Carcassonne. This line, however, should not be followed beyond Quillan, as it has a habit, common to all mountain railways, from the St. Gothard downwards, of disappearing into

a tunnel just as a marvellous stretch of glorious scenery is about to be unrolled far beneath one's feet, and in this particular case two of the most magnificent river gorges in France —probably in Europe—those of *Pierre Lys* and *St. Géorges*, are thus completely missed. It is from Axat, a lovely mountain village between these stupendous ravines, that the Castle of Puy Laurens can best be visited—not by train, but by motor from Quillan, and thence on foot to the towering crag on whose summit is perched one of the most picturesque ruins in Languedoc.

To the comparatively few strangers who visit this delightful semi-Spanish country bordering on Catalonia it is a matter of increasing wonder that so few visitors—from England at least —seem to come here. Yet it is a region for mountaineers, for artists, archæologists, historians, for all lovers of beauty—less spoiled than any corner of France by modern "progress"; a place of snow-capped mountains and lofty wooded hills, of rocks and ruins and rushing rivers as beautiful as any Alpine torrents; of breathless waterfalls, of trackless forests, and marvellous wide horizons bounded by the shining summits of white-hooded peaks across rolling leagues of level plain; of solitary mountain lakes, and gloomy unexplored caverns extending miles into the heart of the hills; the roads are excellent, the climate is perfect, the air is like sparkling wine—and no one ever seems to go there! So much the better, one is inclined to say in all selfishness, for those who do. Its visitors chiefly come from Toulouse and the great towns of the south. Of foreigners there are, in comparison, scarcely any.

An automobile runs daily between Quillan and Foix, passing on its way four or five of the most important castles in the district. First comes Puivert, about fifteen miles from Quillan, high up on the hills, a pretty village nestling at the foot of a huge barren rock, nearly 3000 feet high, covered with loose shale and great stones, from which the broken towers of the old castle rise with pathetic grandeur. It was built in the twelfth century, and captured by De Montfort in November

Photo : Labouche, Toulouse

PUYLAURENS

Photo : Labouche, Toulouse

ROQUEFIXADE

1210. The nobleman appointed by him as *châtelain* was Lambert de Thury, whom he chose as envoy to seek from Peter of Aragon an explanation of the challenge flung down at the Council of Lavaur, and, in case this was refused, to present a letter in which, "without any of the ordinary salutations," De Montfort declares that if Peter II. does not withdraw his defiance he will "proceed against him as against all other enemies of the Church." After fulfilling his mission, during which his life was several times in danger, and delivering the letter, Lambert de Thury returned to his castle, when he immediately granted a large and valuable estate to St. Dominic for Prouille, evidently as a thank-offering for the prayers of the convent, to which he probably owned his safety.

The views here are magnificent across the wooded gorges of the great forests of Puivert and Piccaussel to the horizon, when the High Pyrenees mingle with the clouds. In St. Dominic's day this country must have been a savage, almost trackless, wilderness of wood and mountain, with few and insecure roads; a country apparently planned for secret strongholds, for ambushes, for undiscoverable hiding-places. And it was swarming with heretics who hated and feared him. Wherever he went he carried his life in his hand—and knew it!

At Bélesta, about two miles farther on, the most interesting part of the journey begins. The road here descends by a succession of splendidly engineered but giddy curves to the valley of the Lectoure, a wide, richly cultivated plain as flat as a billiard table, and hence, just before reaching Lavelanet, a pleasant little town with a good hotel, a glimpse is caught between the wooded hills to the left of the terrible Rock of Montségur, nearly 5000 feet high, a few miles to the south in the valley of the Hers.

Montségur was, with one exception, the most impregnable of all the grim fortresses in which the heretics took refuge. So appalling are the precipices which fall away beneath the castle walls, that when it was finally taken in 1242 the assault was made by a handful of heroic men who climbed the rocks,

hitherto considered unassailable, by night. In the morning, looking over the ramparts, they gazed with horror upon "the fearful road which they had climbed in the darkness, but which they would never have dared to risk by day." The fortifications were then almost destroyed, and the place handed over to the Count of Mirepoix.

It had been built on the site of a still more ancient stronghold belonging to that notorious *Parfaite*, Esclairmonde de Foix, with the permission of her brother. Esclairmonde was extremely anxious to provide a place of safety for the chiefs of the Catharist party, and, incidentally, for herself. Here she spent much of her time; here were the headquarters of the hideous heresy whose ramifications spread over the entire Midi. Here plans were concocted, and plots were hatched. It was at Montségur in 1242 that the conspiracy to massacre the Inquisitors at Avignonnet was arranged, and hence were drawn the greater number of the assassins. It was this abominable crime which led to the destruction of the fortress and the subsequent execution of the whole garrison—not one of whom was guiltless of innocent blood, and who all refused to save their lives by abjuring their heresy. All who were not slain during the attack were burnt in the castle court. It is a horrible story, and it hangs about Montségur like a cloud. But the act of swift retributive justice was more than justified. It was the only way to deal with a nest of bloodthirsty conspirators whose very existence was a grave social danger. Men saw these things very simply and clearly in the thirteenth century, and, as has already been said, the Albigenses knew perfectly what risks they ran. Montségur was the seat of the Catharist "bishops" and their acolytes, men like Guilabert de Castres and Bertrand Martin, who "hereticated" children of five years old; and hither there was a constant but ceaseless flow of sectaries, going and coming by break-neck paths known only to the initiated. So long as Montségur and other like plague-spots remained undisturbed there was little hope of finally exterminating the Albigensian heresy.

Photo: Touring Club of France

MONTSÉGUR, AND THE VALLEY OF LAVALANET

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

ON THE WAY TO MONTSÉGUR—THE VALLEY OF LAVALANET

It is more than probable that St. Dominic penetrated even to Montségur, at least on one occasion. At the time when the Crusaders were getting the upper hand, and city after city was falling before De Montfort, the leading *Parfaits*, and with them a large number of *Croyants*, took refuge in Montségur. Among the former was a certain Arnauld Baudriga, a man evidently known to the Saint, who had been a "clothed heretic" for seven years Not long afterwards he was reconciled and absolved by St. Dominic himself (the evidence was given by his son before the Inquisitors at Las Bordas in 1245). "The servant of Christ was consumed with a devouring zeal for the salvation of those who had wandered from the true Faith. As the hart pants for the water-brooks, so his soul thirsted for martyrdom." Can we doubt that this passionate enthusiasm and fearlessness led him to seek his lost sheep in the very stronghold of Satan? It is difficult to think otherwise, when we remember his answer to his would-be assassins at the *Croix du Sicaire.*

Montségur, whose grim precipices overhang the little river Lasset, a tributary of the Hers, can be visited from Lavelanet, from which it is distant by road about nine miles, by way of Villeneuve d'Olmes and Montferrier, each of which possesses the ruins of an ancient castle. Of the general beauty of the scenery it is difficult to say too much! This pilgrimage should on no account be missed, but it is as well to undertake it on a cool day.

From Lavelanet the road ascends again, after crossing the Doctouyre, to a height of nearly 2000 feet, whence a magnificent view towards Tarascon is obtained. Not the Tarascon of Tartarin, be it understood, the Tarascon of Provence, but the little-known though beautiful Tarascon of Guienne, clustering round its conical rock crowned with a solitary round-tower. This should be visited from Foix, for the high-road does not pass through it, but it is in descending from the height, again by a succession of giddy curves which recall the Ghaut roads of the Nilgiris, that two noble castles

come into view successively on the right — Roque-fixade, whose ruined walls it is almost impossible to distinguish from the rock out of which they grow, and marvellous Leychert, each perched on the summit of an apparently inaccessible height. The road skirts the base of each, affording views of these ruins from many different angles, each more striking than the last.

Again rising, after crossing the lovely valley of the Scios, the road descends in one final magnificent sweep into the valley of the Ariège, and after a journey of nearly fifty miles through some of the finest scenery in France, the automobile stops at a hotel at the edge of the river, just opposite the ancient bridge of the picturesque town of Foix.

I do not know how to describe Foix better than by saying it is exactly like an extraordinarily well-painted piece of theatrical scenery! The only natural beauty it does not possess is a lake, though there are several in the neighbourhood. It has everything—a foreground of delightful old houses set in trees, the fine bridge across the foaming green river, just below which there is an old mill; to the left is the castle rock, backed by a lofty mountain, to the right a towering wooded hill. Across the middle distance, a hazy symphony of blues and greens, barred with long blurred lines of poplars and patched with thick woods, winds the white road to Quillan, and in the midst the conical peak of Montgaillard stands out clear against a magnificent shadowy background of purple mountains which we have just crossed by passes from here invisible. The colouring was perfect on the fair September day of my pilgrimage; the weather glorious, the sky the deep blue of a cornflower. Across the narrow bridge the old houses climbed the rock, on the top of which stood the castle. One felt for a moment, in the clear dry mountain air, that Foix was a place in which to live and die!

The city owed its origin to the ancient Abbey, which was dedicated in the fifth century to St. Volusien of Tours. In the ninth century this was given by Charles the Bald to the Abbey of St. Thibéry at Agde, and it

was for many centuries as flourishing and important as its sister-shrine, St. Antonin de Frédélas at Pamiers. Of the castle there is no mention till we read of it in the will of Roger *le Vieux*, Count of Carcassonne (1002), who left it to his second son, Bernard Roger, grandfather of that Roger II. of Foix who built the Castle of Pamiers and transferred the Abbey of Frédélas to its present site. Raymond Roger *le Batailleur*, the "Wolf of Foix," St. Dominic's enemy, was the great-grandson of this Roger II., and claimed kinship with the House of Aragon through his Spanish grandmother, Chimène of Barcelone, and with that of Trencavel through his mother Cécile, daughter of Raymond I. of Carcassonne.

It was a terrible race, even in those grim days when a noble's word was law, and the law was instantly enforced with the sword. It is in a sense impossible for us, in this age of sentimental humanitarianism, accurately to understand the almost inconceivable brutality of that "altogether joyous" thirteenth century! The *seigneurs* of the Midi ruled the country by fear and force of arms, just as the dreaded *Rheingrafen*, from their castles on the banks of the great northern river, ruled the *Rheinland*. In the veins of both ran the blood of the barbaric Visigoth, and contemporary chroniclers speak of *Le Batailleur* as the fiercest and most dreaded of the band of robber-chieftains whose strongholds nestled like eyries in the outlying spans of the Pyrenees. He was the characteristic representative of a family of unusual physical courage; sensual, brutal, overbearing, whose love was to be feared as much as his hate; a man of unbridled passions, a truce-breaker, unrestrained by fear of God or man, unrestrained by his solemn oaths, unrestrained by anything but the consideration of his own personal advantage. After the battle of Muret he had submitted, resigning his castle of Foix into the Legate's hands, had been "reconciled"[1] by a special Papal

[1] Together with Raymond of Toulouse. Both died in 1222, Raymond suddenly. Being again under sentence of excommunication, his body was refused burial. His son, Raymond VII., endeavoured to prove to the Apostolic See that his father had "shown signs of penitence," but all was in vain.

envoy in 1214, at Narbonne, and signed a truce of fifteen years with De Montfort which was ratified at the Lateran Council of 1215—and shamelessly broken two years later. This good can be said of him—he was absolutely fearless. The only power which could ever have influenced him was the Faith he had forsaken. Yet to this man's son, Roger Bernard the Great, the murderer of priests, grace was given, after a life of crime, to submit before it was too late. He resigned his dominions to his son, and took the Cistercian habit in the Abbey of Boulbonne, founded and endowed by his ancestors.

Raymond Roger's almost insane hatred of the priesthood was notorious. His barbarous treatment of such ecclesiastics as fell alive into his hands far exceeded in horror that of any of his fellows. Mutilation, torture, death by thirst and slow starvation, perpetual imprisonment in circumstances of unspeakable indignity were his usual methods. One of his escapades was to capture, while out riding, Walter de Langton, brother of the Archbishop of Canterbury, with his friend, Lambert De Thury. They only surrendered to force, on certain sworn conditions, not one of which was kept. They were imprisoned for more than a year here in this very castle in a dark hole in which they could neither lie at full length nor stand upright, loaded with chains, and nearly starved to death. On another occasion, having sworn upon the Blessed Sacrament not to molest the Canons of Pamiers in any way, the Count caused to be cut in pieces, while the victim was in the very act of saying Mass, one of their number who had protested against the introduction of a heresiarch into the castle. At the same time he put out the eyes of another priest, and, entering the Abbey Church, summoned the Abbot to give up the keys of the monastery. The Abbot refused, placing them on the *châsse* of St. Antoninus, thinking that there even the Wolf of Foix would scarcely dare to touch them. But the murderer, snatching the keys, in the presence of renegades and buffoons locked the entire body of clergy into the church, where he kept them close prisoners

without food or water for three days, during which time he caused the monastery buildings to be defiled in the most horrible way, himself the ringleader in the profanation.

It was he who boasted at the Lateran Council of all the cruelties he had perpetrated upon the Crusaders. "Not one," he loudly declared, "of all the perjured traitors whom I and my men have taken prisoner but has lost his eyes, his feet, his fists, or his fingers. I rejoice in the thought of those whom I have put to death, and my only regret is that I have not destroyed many more." This announcement, considering the audience before whom it was made, is at least not lacking in courage! He alluded, of course, to the 6000 German pilgrims he had slain at Montjoie. Another knight thereupon cried to the assembled prelates, with an oath: "If I had known anything more was to be heard of this affair, and that the Court of Rome would make so much noise about it, I can assure you all that there would have been many more of those Crusaders without eyes and noses."

One thing must strike us forcibly. Such men as Raymond of Toulouse and Raymond Roger were continually appearing at Rome to "justify" themselves of crimes of which they were perfectly aware they were guilty. They ran to the Holy Father, making light of what was then a long and dangerous journey, exactly as a disobedient child will run protesting to his mother, when rebuked for a fault! In spite of heresy, in spite of everything, they never for a single instant dreamt of denying the authority of "the Lord Pope," against whom they were in open rebellion. It is a curious paradox.

It was such men as the Count of Foix, in whom the most bigoted anti-Catholic would be puzzled to find any real religion; men who were actually a danger to the political and social state, who were the actual leaders of the Albigensian movement—which, it can never be said too often, was as much an outrage to the nation as to the Church. It is such men as Raymond Roger that a lying sentimentalism has presented as persecuted heroes, dying for freedom of faith under the tortures of the Inquisition, in the flames of the *auto-da-fè*.

Raymond Roger died in his bed of an internal complaint, in 1222, at Pamiers, after a long career of rapine and murder, during thirty-five years of which he had ruled the countship of Foix. It is interesting to note, however, that in 1221, the year of St. Dominic's death, he confirmed by deed in his own name and that of his successors, the "rights, privileges, and possessions" of Prouille at Fanjeaux and Limoux, "for the love of God and the remission of his sins." After his long life of crime he made this act of tardy repentance, and probably died in communion with the Church, though this we do not know certainly. The spark of Faith still burnt beneath the ashes of the terrible past of this son of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

It is possible that St. Dominic visited the tyrant in his castle, at any rate before the Proclamation of the Crusade, and that his radiant fearlessness appealed to the man who knew not fear. But however this may be, Foix was well known to St. Dominic. The grand old castle on its hanging crag is unfortunately to-day thoroughly "restored," after being largely rebuilt in the sixteenth century. But at least one tower, and of course the dungeons and foundations, date from before the thirteenth century. It was taken for the first time in 1272 from Roger Bernard III., great-grandson of *Le Batailleur* by Philip the Bold, King of France, who undermined the already overhanging rock in such a way that the besieged feared lest both rock and citadel should fall into the river.

Of the Cathedral, which, consecrated in 1125, was until the sixteenth century the church of the great Augustinian monastery of St. Volusien, and which later, after the restoration that followed the Huguenot outrages, was served by Canons Regular of France until 1790, there is little to say, for nothing but the lofty Roman nave remains from the thirteenth century. The Castle, however, contains much of interest, and would, I knew, amply repay a weary pilgrim for a long climb up the steep, zigzag approaches—neatly set, it is un-

necessary to add, with the inevitable cobble-stones, which lead to its entrance.

Just outside the great doors, leaning over a low wall, from which a splendid panorama of the valley of the Ariège, with the city nestling at the foot of the rock below, is to be obtained, I perceived an individual in uniform, with a blade of grass in his mouth, enjoying the *dolce far niente* of a hot Sunday afternoon. Rightly guessing this to be the custodian, I imagined that I had now but to ask and enter:

"Good day, Monsieur. Is it possible to see the Castle?"

(*Individual, after a short pause*) "No."

"But I have come on purpose to see it!"

(*Individual, with detached air and slight shrug*) "Ah!"

"Is it necessary to have an authorisation?"

"No."

"Do you wish to see my passport and papers?"

(*Individual, slightly bored*) "No."

"Is there then no means of getting into the Castle?"

"None."

(*Visitor, with studied calm*) "To whom, Monsieur, is it permitted to suppose that this Castle now belongs?"

(*Individual, instructively*) "To the State."

(*Visitor, scathingly*) "And is the State, then, allowed to possess itself of these historic monuments, and keep out visitors who come here for purposes of research?"

(*Individual, who has by this time lost all interest in the discussion*) "Yes."

(Undignified but slow retreat of pilgrim, followed by the speculative eye of the individual, who is still engaged upon the blade of grass.)

And that is why I never explored the Castle of Foix!

It is impossible even to name all the splendid ruins which appeal to pilgrim, artist, and historian. Such are the Castle of Mirepoix, overhanging the quaint old city of that name; Lordat, between Tarascon and Ax, on its precipitous peak jutting from the side of a Pyrenean ravine formed by a roar-

ing mountain torrent hurrying to join the Ariège; remote Miglos, in the heart of almost inaccessible mountains, which, like Lordat, can perhaps best be reached from Les Cabannes —these two, in their surroundings of magnificent desolation, are in some respects the most interesting of all; Montolieu, besieged by De Montfort; Usson, Quié, Quériguet, and a score of others.

But the most important of all, at least to the pilgrim, are the "Four Castles of Lastours," in the Montagne-Noire—four sister-fortresses, each perched like an eagle on the summit of a needle of rock, to one of which, Cabarets, the Albigensian fugitives from Carcassonne, "carrying with them nothing but their sins," escaped in 1209.

A light railway, such as opens up so many of the most beautiful districts of the Midi, runs from Carcassonne to Lastours, which is about thirteen miles distant; and from the little station, by winding mountain paths cut in the side of rocky gorges and through fragrant pine-woods, the Four Castles are approached. Quertinieux, Fleur Espinè, Tour Regnie, Cabarets—to see them is immediately to understand why they were never taken by storm. In 1211 Pierre Roger de Cabaret yielded them to De Montfort after two desperate assaults on his way to the siege of Lavaur, and it is known that St. Dominic visited them not once nor twice, for Lastours was too near to Carcassonne, too important a stronghold of Catharism, too full of his straying sheep to be passed over by this true shepherd of souls.

The list might be continued indefinitely, for the subject is fascinating. A month might easily be spent over this delightful part of one's pilgrimage, which could be widely extended, though most of the more important ruins have been named. Nearly all are quite accessible. Those who visit them will never make the not uncommon mistake of imagining that the only castles worth seeing in France are the magnificent buildings of Touraine. Travellers who fall into that error have forgotten, because they have never seen, the ruined castles of St. Dominic's Country.

XXII

NOTRE DAME DE ROCAMADOUR

St. Dominic, in this last stage of our pilgrimage, is passing out of his own country altogether,—the country which he was never to see again. He was on his way to Paris in 1219, by way of Brive, Limoges, and Orléans, when he spent a night on the northern border of Languedoc before passing into the Limousin, at the most ancient and by far the most beautiful shrine of Our Lady in France—Notre Dame de Rocamadour.

It was assuredly not his first visit, for he must have passed this famous place of pilgrimage at least three times before, on his journeys to Paris and Denmark from Spain with Don Diego of Osma, in 1203 and 1204, and on the return journey in 1203. There is no doubt Rocamadour was familiar to him, that he had already ascended the great staircase on his knees, had prayed in the Miraculous Chapel, had venerated the body of the holy founder, then incorrupt and intact. But he was never to see it again. It was at Rocamadour he bade farewell to his own fair country of the South. It is at Rocamadour that we bid farewell to St. Dominic.

A crowd of carriages and motors wait to-day at the little wayside station of Rocamadour, ready to whirl the modern pilgrim to his destination over about four miles of what is undoubtedly the dustiest road in France! If such a pilgrim has read anything about the celebrated shrine, the chances are that he will have imagined Rocamadour as a precipitous hill rising high above a barren plain, its sanctuaries and castle hewn—as indeed some of them are—out of the solid rock.

Pictures certainly do give that idea. But then, the pictures are invariably taken from below.

As the motor whizzes through blinding clouds of dust across a country, dry, flat, parched and brown, with nothing higher than a bush or broken wall in sight, the pilgrim begins to wonder how far it is to Rocamadour, and why he does not see the hill. The desolation of the place is terrible. This desert is the *Causse de Gramat*, a lofty tableland of rock, so thoroughly and curiously fissured that no stream can flow across it, the water soon sinking down through dry cracks in the strata to form the strange *cloups*, or underground rivers, which have formed such marvellous caverns as those of Padirac, with its eight lakes and thirty-two rapids; and the Réveillon; and which fall, often in magnificent cascades, from the face of the huge limestone cliffs, which, as at Rocamadour, shut in a green and fertile valley. It is the very barrenness of the arid *Causses* which causes the fruitful abundance of the valleys beneath; it is that which makes this corner of Languedoc, now the Department of the Lot, a country of extraordinary contrasts.

Across the stony uneven plain, covered with rough scrub and patches of short, dry grass, on which sheep are browsing—the only creatures which could possibly live here—a little group of houses becomes visible. It is the ancient Hospice of St. John, the last and nearest to Rocamadour of the many erected along the old pilgrimage roads; but this the pilgrim does not know as his eyes wander from side to side, looking in vain for the mountain. . . .

And then, suddenly, he perceives that the road, which has swerved to the left, is running on the very edge of an abyss, a precipice of grey, perpendicular limestone cliffs; and he sees beneath him, a short distance ahead, the great rock for which he has been straining his eyes across the *Causse*. The churches, the castle, are there, more wonderful, more beautiful than anything he had imagined hitherto, and in a few minutes he is standing in the castle court. For the modern road to Rocamadour, turning off at the Hospice, follows the

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

ROCAMADOUR: THE CASTLE, CHURCH, AND VILLAGE

edge of the cliff and ends at the castle; the old pilgrimage road wound its way humbly to the village beneath, and thence the mediæval pilgrim completed his journey on his knees!

Of all the shrines of Our Lady in France—and in the thirteenth century there were probably well over a hundred which were at least of national renown—that of Rocamadour is the most ancient, though not now the most celebrated; the most imposing, and the possessor of the most curious history. This goes back to the first century, and in spite of the growing tendency of our own day to reject all oral testimony and tradition and to accept nothing which cannot be proved by documentary evidence, the modern critic must at least hesitate to discredit the unbroken tradition of nineteen centuries, which ascribes the foundation of Rocamadour to one called and chosen by our Lord Himself in the days when He walked in Galilee.

St. Martial, the apostle and first Bishop of Limoges, was sent into Gaul by St. Peter immediately after the Ascension, says tradition, which adds that he was accompanied by a certain Amator (Amadour) and his wife Veronica, Amadour has always been believed to be no less a person than Zacchæus, the publican of Capharnaum, who climbed a sycamore tree to watch our Lord passing by. While St. Martial travelled through the *Novempopulania* preaching Christ to the pagans, the husband and wife settled in Médoc, where St. Martial visited them, consecrated one of the first Christian altars raised in France, to the honour of St. Stephen, the proto-martyr, and baptized the king of those regions, Sigébert, converted to Christianity by their teaching, example, and miracles. After the death of Veronica, Amadour withdrew into the savage wilds of Quercy, where he was visited by St. Sernin of Toulouse and St. Martial, the latter consecrating an altar built by his old friend in honour of the holy Mother of God, whom Amadour had seen and known in the flesh, and for whom he had a most tender devotion.

There in a cave of the barren rock dwelt the saintly hermit

for many years, guarding the earliest shrine in France of Mary Immaculate. This primitive altar still exists, hidden beneath the splendid fabric of that which now stands in the Miraculous Chapel of Our Lady of Rocamadour. After Amadour's death in A.D. 70, at the foot of his altar, he was by his own desire buried in a cavity of the rock just outside the door of the chapel. Whether or not Amadour was Zacchæus can, of course, never be proved—that part of the story is but legend, however continuous and well authenticated. But what is an undisputed fact is that from the middle of the first century Amadour, a pilgrim, erected an altar in this rock to the honour of Our Lady. And ever since the place has been the *Rupes Amatoris*, the Rock of Amadour—Rocamadour.

In 1166 a pious knight having begged for burial in the tomb of the Saint, the body, which had lain there for nearly 1000 years, was discovered incorrupt,[1] and was placed in the church, where such notable miracles were wrought by the intercession of St. Amadour, that Henry II., King of England, then at Castelnau de Brétenoux, himself visited Rocamadour [2] to see the holy relics and to pray at the shrine.

A subterranean chapel was hewn out of the rock to receive the remains of St. Amadour, and dedicated in his honour. Here his body rested till 1562, when the insane savagery of the fanatical Huguenots was sweeping like devouring flame over the unhappy country. "Having sworn to abolish on the soil of France the worship of Our Lady and the Saints, they seized the sanctuary of Rocamadour, and having pillaged the higher shrines (the Miraculous Chapel, St. Michael, and the

[1] It has been suggested—if indeed its preservation were not wholly miraculous—that the body of St. Amadour had become petrified, and this, in the light of what took place in 1562, would seem a not improbable hypothesis, though it does not accord with all the details. But as regards the flexibility of the members there is probably an exaggeration.

[2] This was not Henry II.'s only visit to Rocamadour. It was here, a few years later, that he vowed to become reconciled with St. Thomas of Canterbury, a vow which he immediately carried out at Amboise. In 1182 he was proclaimed King of Aquitaine at a palace in the rock-city below, the *Château de la Caretta*, destroyed at the Revolution, which stood at the foot of the great staircase. A beautiful sixteenth century mansion now stands close to the site. The portion of the main street adjoining is still called the *Rue de la Couronnerie*.

Basilica of St. Saviour), they dashed into the holy place where lay the relics of the Saint. Forcing the door, they surrounded the incorrupt body[1] with wood, to destroy it by fire. But the body which had resisted corruption, resisted the flames. Then their rage knew no bounds. They tore it from the tomb, and threw it on a bed of glowing coals, lighted at the entrance of the chapel ; they pierced and hacked it with their halberds : " Break since you will not burn ! " shouted Bessonias, the heretic captain, and, seizing a blacksmith's hammer, he struck the body with all his force, again and again. The bones, on which may distinctly be seen the traces of burning, were collected by the faithful, and placed in a reliquary which is venerated above the altar in the chapel where the body had rested from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. A certain part of these relics, however, has been replaced in the original tomb, now closed with an iron *grille*, in which the Saint was first buried, and whence his remains were removed in 1166. Such is the story of the Founder of Rocamadour.

The pilgrim who is forewarned will leave the automobile at the Hospice of St. John, and thence, taking the road to the left, which curves down the face of the cliff, will approach Rocamadour from below. The village, most of whose houses are built against the rock, whose single main street is hewn out of the face of the precipice, is still some distance from the bottom of the valley, and in itself, apart from the historic shrine above, well repays study. From the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries it was, though so small, an important fortified town, but never recovered from the wholesale destruction wrought by the Huguenots in 1562. Traces of the ancient city, of the mediæval fortifications, can easily be discerned as we enter by the first of the three great gates which

[1] An eye-witness of the scene related to Odo de Gissey, a contemporary historian, that so perfect was the preservation of the body that the hair and beard still remained as in life, and the members were as flexible as those of one recently dead. Among the list of saints whose incorrupt bodies are still exposed for veneration may be mentioned the names of St. Clare (at her church in Assisi), St. Catherine of Ricci (in her convent at Prato, Tuscany), and St. Catherine of Bologna (at Bologna).

formerly guarded Rocamadour. For the modern village has grown out of the ruins of the mediæval city. Passing through the second gate, half-way down the street, we stand at the foot of the Great Staircase of 216 steps, leading to the sanctuaries above, and which, until recent days, pilgrims invariably ascended on their knees, reciting the Rosary, an *Ave* on each step. On the occasion of great pilgrimages the crowd here could only be compared to that which passes up the *Scala Santa* on Good Friday, for the pilgrims were numbered by thousands—coming from England, Germany, Spain, and many a more distant land. This first flight of 140 steps leads us straight to a little platform, now unfortunately shut in by modern houses, as the upper part of the staircase is lined with stalls and booths for the selling of medals, rosaries, pictures, and the usual "objects of piety," not forgetting curious little statues in black and white plaster of Notre Dame de Rocamadour.

Here begin the actual fortifications of the church, never completely rebuilt since 1562, but of which enough still remains to show us what they must have been in St. Dominic's day. Hence, by a further flight of sixty-six steps, beneath the splendidly restored Palace of the Bishops of Tulle, to whose diocese Rocamadour formerly belonged, we reach the *Parvis*. This is an irregularly shaped court, round which are grouped, at five different levels, the seven shrines of Rocamadour. In the Palace were formerly lodged the illustrious pilgrims, and it was the home of the resident and visiting clergy. Its great tower was one of the principal defences of the place. Destroyed in 1562, it was for several centuries a mere mass of crumbling masonry, overgrown with weeds and fern, a source of great danger from its position on the precipice both to inhabitants and pilgrims, when about fifty years ago Mgr. Grimardias, Bishop of Cahors, determined to restore the ruin. The work has been so well carried out after the original design that the lofty "Tower of the Bishop" once more dominates the valley as it did when Saints and Kings came on pilgrimage to Rocamadour.

Standing at the head of the Great Staircase, we are faced by

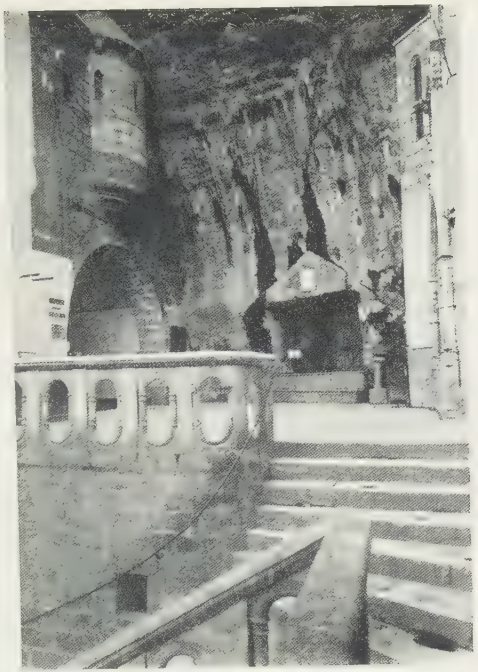

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

ROCAMADOUR : A CORNER OF THE *PARVIS*

(Showing St. Michael's Chapel (exterior), the tomb of St. Amadour, and (on right) entrance to Miraculous Chapel)

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

ROCAMADOUR : THE GREAT STAIRCASE

the entrance to the Basilica of St. Saviour, a large church whose lofty walls rise high above us at the top of a fresh flight of steps. At the foot of these is the descent into the crypt-chapel of St. Amadour, and in a semicircle to the right are the entrances of three other chapels, that of St. Joachim and St. Anne (fifteenth century), St. Blaise[1] and St. John the Evangelist (late thirteenth century); and next the Great Staircase, that of St. John the Baptist,[2] which has been beautifully restored, and is now the Baptistery of the parish.

The Chapel of St. Blaise is interesting to a student of human nature on account of the hundreds of pencilled inscriptions scribbled all over its bare whitewashed walls. It has not yet been restored and redecorated, and Mass is not[3] said here. It is simply an empty building, containing a few benches and an unfurnished altar, but, in spite of this, with a certain class of pilgrims it would seem to be the most highly favoured of all the chapels of Rocamadour. For St. Blaise, it evidently appears, is the patron of young people desirous to marry, and the walls of his shrine are literally covered with petitions such as these, which I copied on the spot:—

"*St. Blaise, faites que je me marie cette année.*"

"*St. Blaise, faites-nous trouver un charmant mari.*"

"*St. Blaise, faites que je trouve un mari bien sage.*"

"*St. Blaise, exaucez ma prière, faites-moi trouver sans tarder le mari que je désire.*"

"*Je désire me marier cette année, je me récommande à St. Blaise.*"

"*St. Blaise, faites que je trouve au plus vite celui qui me donnera le bonheur.*"

[1] The relics of this Saint, Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, were brought from the East after one of the Crusades, and Rocamadour received a large part of them, the present chapel being built to receive them. They are still preserved at Rocamadour. The title of St. John the Evangelist has been recently added.

[2] Founded in 1516 by Jean de Valon, Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, who left a large sum of money for a Requiem Mass to be sung here "*touts les lundis de chasque semaine*," also a weekly Mass of Our Lady, and "*de touts les saincts et sainctes de Paradis*." The present chapel is modern, that of the sixteenth century having become dangerously unsafe.

[3] 1910.

To these, and an endless similar litany, may be added such touching petitions as:—

"*St. Blaise, protégez-moi, aidez-moi.*"

"*Notre Dame de Rocamadour, sauvez toute ma famille!*"

"*Mon Dieu, sauvez la France et ramenez le Roi!*"

"Save France, and bring back the King!" Neither Albigenses, Huguenots, nor Freemasons, have after all succeeded in destroying in France "all faith in God, in Blessed Mary, and the Saints!" The pencilled walls of St. Blaise are witnesses, eloquent in silence.

The subterranean church of St. Amadour forms a crypt below the Basilica of St. Saviour. Over its portal is carved the date 1166. A single lofty central pillar supports the massive groined roof; the interior has been simply and fittingly restored and ornamented. The fragments of the ancient woodwork have been preserved, each consisting of four panels, describing the history of St. Amadour from the sycamore-tree in Galilee to the altar of Notre Dame de Rocamadour. It was at the head of the steps leading into the *Parvis* from the crypt that his body was destroyed in 1562.

The Basilica of St. Saviour is a beautiful building of the eleventh century; its double nave divided by two lofty pillars; the whole, pillars, walls, and groined roof, gorgeously painted in brilliant colours. A good many hypercritical people complain of this, but somehow it seems exactly right where everything is essentially primitive. Byzantine mosaics are out of place in a Gothic church, and the most elaborate and lovely frescoes are scarcely needed here, in a building whose every line speaks of the Past, whose wonderful historical associations clothe its stately walls with invisible tapestry. Between the two pillars stands an ancient Crucifix, originally placed over the door of the Canons' Choir, when Rocamadour was served by a Chapter, the clergy occupying the inner nave, while the faithful worshipped in the outer. Round the walls are hung

Photo: Labouche, Toulouse

ROCAMADOUR FROM THE SOUTH
(Showing Castle, Sanctuaries, and Pilgrims' House)

Photo: Neurdein Frères, Paris

THE BASILICA OF ST. SAVIOUR, ROCAMADOUR

banners, and curious portraits of the illustrious pilgrims who have visited Rocamadour throughout the centuries, conspicuous among them being St. Dominic and St. Louis of France.

St. Dominic's beautiful statue, to the left of the High Altar, was indeed the first object which caught my eye on entering, across the church, filled with kneeling pilgrims. For Rocamadour that day was in possession of a large pilgrimage from a distant diocese, accompanied by its clergy, headed by its Bishop, who was giving Benediction at the moment of my entrance into the Basilica. Not everyone in France has forgotten her ancient shrines. A faithful few still remain who choose to worship where countless generations of their forefathers have knelt, who have not deserted the remote grey rocks of such fortress-churches as Le Puy-en-Velay and Rocamadour even for the dazzling glories of Lourdes. In these ancient pilgrimage-churches, whose very stones are saturated with prayer, it is at least possible to pray in peace, to realise the meaning of silence and solitude in a Holy Place. . . .

Beyond the Basilica, at a slightly higher level, stands the Miraculous Chapel, the most sacred of the seven shrines of Rocamadour. For nineteen centuries it has been a centre of devotion. Few, if any, sanctuaries in Europe can lay claim to greater antiquity. It is built in a hollow of the rock, of which the masonry of its exterior wall seems almost to form part. The humble sanctuary built by St. Amadour having been crushed in the fifteenth century by the fall of an enormous rock, the chapel was rebuilt in 1479, only to be destroyed in 1562 by the Huguenots, who entered the sanctuary with 120 horses, pillaging, destroying, burning everything they did not steal. Their booty was enormously valuable, as may be imagined. Only the porch and two windows remain to-day of the beautiful fifteenth century chapel, the ruins of which were rebuilt again as soon as possible after its destruction, by the impoverished Canons of Rocamadour, and further restored in the seventeenth century. It has none of the architectural

beauty of St. Saviour's; it is an oblong chapel, round which runs a wooden gallery supported by massive pillars, which rise to meet the naked rock of the roof. But—it has the historic statue of Notre Dame de Rocamadour,[1] enthroned above the altar, beneath which lies the great worn stone consecrated by St. Martial; its walls, blackened with the smoke of a thousand votive tapers, are of bare rugged rock; the ragged, time-stained banners of many nations, of a hundred pilgrimages, float from the shadows of its roof; from dawn to dark on pilgrimage days it is as crowded with the faithful as is the Grotto of Lourdes itself. From its roof, too, hangs the miraculous Bell, which tradition declares to have been placed there by St. Amadour himself, and which is certainly of immemorial antiquity. Far inland as is Rocamadour, the bell has rung again and again, touched by an invisible power, on the occasion of terrible storms at sea, when lives were being lost, and perishing Bréton sailors were recommending themselves to Notre Dame de Rocamadour! Untouched by the Huguenots, doubtless because it was valueless, the miraculous Bell of Rocamadour is one of the most pathetic relics of the ancient shrine. Of all the beautiful, mystical stories connected with bells, there can be none more touching than this of Our Lady Star of the Sea at Rocamadour, whose bell is rung by prayer.[2]

[1] The origin of this statue is unknown. Tradition ascribes it to St. Amadour. It is in wood, now perfectly black with age, of crude and primitive design. Our Lady is seated, her hands upon the arms of her chair, the Holy Child upon her knee. Antiquarians have unanimously assigned it to the earliest ages of Christianity, some declaring that it quite possibly dates from the first century. It is assuredly the oldest in France.

[2] The first (authenticated) occasion of the ringing of the bell is February 10, 1385. It rang again the following March, in July 1435, and in May 1454. A few weeks after each occurrence, duly noted and certified on oath, pilgrims came to Rocamadour to thank Our Lady for deliverance from shipwreck on the very day on which the bell had rung. On October 14, 1436, the crew of a Bréton vessel were thus saved, all but two who had not invoked Notre Dame de Rocamadour. During the sixteenth century the bell rang no less than ten times; the last time on August 3, 1554, at the moment when a Bréton pilot in charge of a boatload of thirty passengers, and threatened by a violent tempest, made a vow of pilgrimage hither. On September 23, this pilot, Yves de Commodet, appeared to accomplish his vow, and so great was the impression made upon the inhabitants, most of whom had been present in the chapel when the bell rang, that a great public procession was formed, which passed through the city to the sanctuary to the ringing of all the bells of Rocamadour! The devotion to this shrine was great in Brittany.

Just outside the entrance to the Miraculous Chapel is the deep cavity in the rock, guarded by an iron grating, in which the body of St. Amadour rested from 70 to 1166. From the platform on to which the chapel opens, the *Place St. Michel*, one looks down the steps to the *Parvis* below, ringed with its shrines. Beyond it lies a fine view of the valley, shut in as by a wall by the gigantic cliff opposite. To the right towers the restored Palace, and in the wall high above our heads is the famous "*Durandal*" of Roland, son of Charlemagne—the cherished sword which he here offered to Our Lady of Rocamadour. Not the real sword—that, needless to say, was stolen by the Huguenots for the sake of its richly jewelled golden hilt—but a great iron blade chained to the rock, into which it is apparently plunged to half its depth; placed here to remind the faithful of the days when a votive offering was generally a man's most cherished possession. "Shall I give unto the Lord of that which doth cost me nothing?" was a question answered very literally in mediæval days. But space fails us to tell the charming story of Roland and his *Durandal*, of his vow and its fufilment, of a thousand other glories of Rocamadour.

The seventh chapel, that of St. Michael, the second in antiquity, is reached by a narrow stairway, hewn, as is the chapel itself, out of the heart of the rock, which rises above to a height of 300 feet. Like nearly all ancient chapels dedicated to the Archangel, this, with exquisite symbolism, was "built in a very high place." The only point visible from without is the little apse of solid masonry built like a swallow's nest against the cliff. Within the tiny apse are curious old frescoes, dating from the twelfth century, entirely Byzantine both as to style and design. Our Lord in glory is seated behind the altar, surrounded by evangelists, a six-winged seraph, and St. Michael. In this chapel, now closed

A few miles from Brest, a chapel by the sea still exists, bearing the name of *Roche Amadour*.

Tradition ascribes the title "Star of the Sea," by which Our Lady is venerated at Rocamadour, to St. Amadour's gratitude at his deliverance from the perils of the deep.

to the general public, St. Dominic prayed. It is one of the five sanctuaries existing in his day at Rocamadour. The frescoes, now half-effaced, partly by time, partly by the names scribbled all over the figures by visitors whose æsthetic sense would appear to be much the same as that of the Huguenot—were then fresh and bright; the shrines were all glorious with gold and precious things offered to Our Lady and St. Amadour by pilgrim-lovers.

In his day, too, across the grim and lonely *Causses*, and far beyond, along the roads which met here from Spain, from Paris, from Brittany and the sea, from far-away Germany and Italy, towers of refuge and defence, hospices for sleep and shelter had been built by pious hands. For the roads were dangerous; brigands and robbers abounded; the pilgrims were often laden with votive offerings, or were important persons who could be held to ransom. In the days of the Albigensian heresy the sectaries often lay in wait for pilgrimage-trains, dispersing and slaying the defenceless pilgrims. For these reasons it was considered unsafe to travel unarmed, and men went on pilgrimage in large companies, for mutual protection.

It was at Easter, 1219, that St. Dominic, his work in the Midi completed, his First and Second Orders planted and flourishing in Toulouse and Prouille, took a last farewell of his beloved children there, and set his face towards Paris. Just eighteen months earlier (August 15, 1217), Matthew of France and six companions had set out from Prouille on a summer's morning, on the same journey. Hard and difficult as had been their task, they had succeeded nobly, and the little foundation of St. Jacques, at Paris, close to the Orléans Gate, numbered already thirty friars. The thought of the joy of that meeting must have comforted Dominic in the agony of the farewell which he, at least, knew to be final. Henceforth his work lay elsewhere. Italy was to receive her share in the apostolate whose chief glory—let us never forget it—belongs to France! Spain claims him as her son by right of birth;

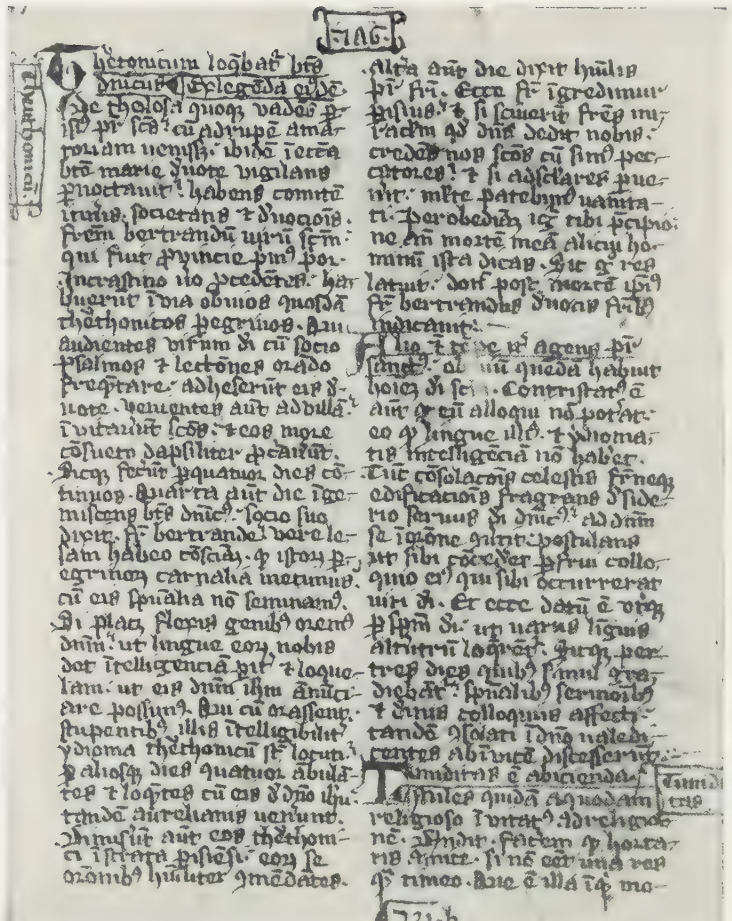

Photo: V. R. Dr. Steffens, Fribourg

THE ORIGINAL MS. OF THE STORY: "HOW ST. DOMINIC LEARNED TO SPEAK GERMAN"

From the *Alphabetum Narrationum*, by Fr. Konrad von Waltenkofen, O.P. (1360), originally in the library of the Dominican Monastery at Bâle.

Italy saw him die, and possesses his holy body in the exquisite tomb at Bologna; but France was the country of his soul, Prouille the home of his heart! How he cherished and watched over each and all of his foundations only a student of his life can realise; but his deepest love was given to that "eldest daughter" which for more than twelve years he had so tenderly guided—the future mother of a world-wide family —the "little one," which was to "become a thousand."

Of his farewells to Prouille, to Fanjeaux, who shall speak? St. Dominic made them, and setting forth with Bertrand de Garrigues, that "emulator of his holiness and devotion," he took the road to the north, passing Montauban and Figéac, crossing the robber-haunted *Causse de Gramat* with no other weapons but his breviary and staff; and so came, on a spring evening, to Rocamadour, the very strength of his sorrow uplifting his soul, and filling it with peace.

Here, all that night, with his friend, he prayed in the old rock-hewn sanctuaries,—for Prouille, for Toulouse, for Paris, for Lyon, for San Sisto at Rome, where Prouille had already made her first foundation, for Bologna, where the Third Order was to arise—for all the newly made foundations, and those which were yet to be. Here, on this precipice, lifted up between heaven and earth, he prayed in the peace of Rocamadour for all his children. . . .

We can scarcely doubt that he chose the Altar of Our Lady at which to say Mass next morning, before starting in the dawn with his friend on the road to Paris, where they were soon overtaken by a band of German pilgrims "who had heard them pray." The last, and perhaps the most beautiful, of the stories which we have to tell concerning our Saint may well be entitled: "How St. Dominic learned to speak German."

At noon the pilgrims shared their meal with the two Friars, who were thus their guests for four consecutive days, having nothing of their own. "Upon the road Blessed Dominic said to his companion: 'Truly I have it on my conscience that we reap the temporal goods of these pilgrims,

while they gain no spiritual thing from us. If you agree, let us kneel and pray that God will make us understand their language, and speak it, that we may preach Jesus Christ.'" This they did immediately, and to the great surprise of the pilgrims at once began to talk German fluently, "so that for four more days, walking together, they spoke of the Lord Jesus."

After eight days they arrived at Orléans, whence the German pilgrims went on to Notre Dame de Chartres, "recommending themselves humbly to the prayers" of their wonderful companions, in whom the miracle of Pentecost had been repeated; and we cannot doubt, bestowing upon them sufficient provision of food to last till they reached Paris. St. Dominic forbid Fr. Bertrand to speak of the miracle to the Brethren during his lifetime, "lest they should take us for saints who are but sinners." But after Dominic's death the story was told.

Rocamadour has a pilgrim's house to-day, the "House of Mary"—a single row of spotless white cells, each opening into a long corridor whose opposite wall is the bare rock of the precipice. A narrow pathway cut out of the overhanging cliff leads from the church to its hospitable door—and ends there! It is an eyrie built half-way up the precipice: the village sleeps on its ledges beneath; below the houses the ground slopes sharply down to the fair green valley of the Alzou, tree-clad and fertile.

Facing me, across the valley, as I lean out into the night from the high arched windows in the topmost storey of the pilgrims' house, rises a mighty, magnificent wall of grey, turreted limestone, like that upon which Rocamadour is built. The air is delicious; keen, chill, clear; the moon is rising, and in its light the walls and lofty tower of the sanctuary, painted in black and silver, a hundred yards to the left, seem to be poised upon shadows. Behind the house, above me, the overhanging cliff rises abruptly to a height of 300 feet, while beneath my window it falls away to an almost equal

depth below. The place is crowded with pilgrims, but it is silent. The last hymn to Our Lady died away an hour ago.

Silence—the silence of the mountains; and peace—the peace of holy places; the Peace of Prouille, the Peace of Bethlehem, the Peace that passeth understanding.

It is the end. Our pilgrimage is over. St. Dominic, with his breaking heart, his magnificent courage, his burning zeal, is leaving the country which shall know him no more, and here, in the peace of Rocamadour, he has prayed for all his children—has prayed for us—for me! Let us watch him in the dawn as he goes from us.

All night long he has prayed in the Chapel of Our Lady; very early in the morning he has said Mass there. Now two white-robed figures are mounting the long chain of steps which leads to the old castle at the top of the rock. He will stop there a moment to look down at Rocamadour—to look back across the barren, stony plain, across fair Languedoc, towards Toulouse . . . towards Prouille . . . towards home. . . .

Then, thanking God and taking courage, he turns silently away, and sets his face towards the Future. . . .

But we, who love him, shall surely find him—still—in St. Dominic's Country.

APPENDIX A

THE CATHARIST HERESY

THE Catharist Heresy, as St. Bernard and St. Dominic found it in France, was the fifth and last form of Manichæism. All interested in the apostolate of St. Dominic would do well to study the subject —which is vast, for the Manichæan Heresy lasted over a thousand years—in the works of the great French *Savants*—Mgr. Douais, Bishop of Beauvais, M. Jean Guiraud, and others—who have written of it exhaustively.

From the third to the thirteenth century (and for centuries before the Christian era, for Manichæism was largely derived from Zoroastrianism) this deadliest of heresies had set itself to answer the world-old question, "What is the Origin of Evil?" And the answer[1] given was more terrible than the question itself, not only to the individual, but to society both religious and civil. For Manichæism undermined the very foundations of moral and social life, and threatened—if triumphant—the existence of the human race. It must never be forgotten that this heresy was—

(1) Anti-Christian; (2) Anti-Social.

We may confine ourselves here to a study of its anti-social character in three aspects. (1) A Manichæan was forbidden to take an oath under any circumstances, in a court of justice or otherwise. On the other hand, duplicity and deceit—not to say downright lying—were encouraged. A man was to deny or dissimulate his faith with his lips as long as his heart remained attached. "*I am not so pitiless as Jesus Christ*," said Manes; "*if one of my disciples renounces me before men to save his life, not only will I recognize him with joy as one of my disciples, but I shall be under an obligation to him for that lie, because it has been the means of preserving my doctrine.*" Comment is needless. Again, (2) marriage was not only discouraged, but strictly forbidden to the "Elect"; and the "Auditors" were advised that an illegal

[1] That there were two Gods—one good, one evil.

connection was preferable (as being more easily broken off) to the bond between husband and wife. Facilities for loosening the marriage tie were numerous. The terrible immorality quite openly fostered by such a state of things it is impossible to describe here. Thirdly, (3) it was forbidden to bring children into the world; and it was also considered highly laudable to escape from life by committing suicide. This was usually done by the *Endura*, *i.e.* death from starvation, though bleeding to death and poison were in great favour. A study of Manichæism will soon show that its teachings, logically developed, spell nothing less than anarchy.

Manichæism divided the world into three classes: (1) The Elect (the *Parfaits* of Languedoc), who observed fully the doctrines and teaching of Manes; (2) the Auditors (*Croyants*), who, living as they chose in the world, believed in Manichæism, and who, by initiation, at their death could become Perfect; (3) the rest of mankind (practically a negligible quantity).

The heresy, after the terrible death of its founder in A.D. 276, though ceaselessly persecuted, spread far and wide. In the East it met with great success. Between the IV–XI centuries it had conquered Northern India, China, Tibet, and the countries east of Persia, its home. It was tolerated, curiously enough, by Mohammedans. Its chief stronghold was Egypt, where it entered into the very lives of the people. Within the (Eastern) Roman Empire it reached the zenith of its power from 375–400, after which it declined. Emperor after emperor issued edicts against it; again and again it was practically—but never thoroughly—exterminated, chiefly by reason of the secrecy and duplicity of its adherents. In the West its progress was for a time much checked by St. Augustine's magnificent crusade against it. During his latter years it decreased in importance, though for some centuries Africa was still considered a hot-bed of Manichæism. Known at different times and in various countries by many names —Priscillianists, Paulicians, Astati, Albani—the adherents of the sect concentrated in the IX century in Bulgaria, where they were styled Bugri, or Bogomiles, though they invariably spoke of themselves as Christians. This particular development of the heresy was, up till then, the most important. The Bogomiles spread rapidly, insidiously, over the Balkan Peninsula into Russia and Greece, and came further into Northern Italy and Southern France. On the other hand, Manichæism had crept up to the gates of the Pyrenees from Africa, through Spain. It is not

always realised that this pernicious sect was the chief obstacle to the reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches in the Middle Ages. The Bogomiles took pleasure in evoking religious passions, and were always the deadly enemies of Rome. In 1143–1144 the heresy was strongly condemned by the Council of Constantinople. But even then it was too late. Manichæism in its final form of Catharism (Gr. *catharos*, pure, an attribute applied by the heretics to themselves), or Albigensianism (a clumsy word much better expressed in French as *Albigeois*, the origin of which is much disputed), had already entered into Italy and France. (In the former country the sectaries had several names, *e.g. Patarini.*) This invasion took place between 1000–1015, and Catharism "spread like a drop of oil." In the north of Italy the Lombards, struggling against the Popes, gladly took the dualist strangers as allies with the idea of mixing religion and politics. Moreover the worship of the gods had hardly yet been chased from Italy. Even in the XI century there were those who welcomed in Manichæism a return to Paganism.

Such was the dualistic heresy which flooded Languedoc in the time of St. Dominic, antagonistic to all established religious and social order, hideous, unnatural, yet satanically attractive for the basest reasons to the larger part of its adherents. For in spite of certain technical differences which one or two high authorities find between Catharists, Bogomiles, and Manichæans, or even the shades of divergence which have been said to exist between Catharist and Albigensian, all forms of this heresy were substantially the same. The Elect of the III century were the *Parfaits* of the XIII. The two divisions of the sect were unchanged. The *Parfaits* were necessarily restricted in number. Not all could receive the hard sayings of Manes and practise to the full his unnatural austerities—unsustained, we must never forget, by sacrament or prayer. A *Croyant* became a *Parfait* in two ways: (*a*) As a child or adult, by initiation, after which he lived a life not unlike that of a Buddhist monk, without his idleness; (*b*) on his death-bed. The ceremony in both cases was the same —the reception of the *Consolamentum*. Before describing this function, which took the place of the entire sacramental system, it may be well to state the neo-Manichæan attitude towards the Sacraments.

(1) *Baptism.*—Utterly denied. Before receiving the *Consolamentum* (we are told by Raynier Sacchoni, the *Parfait* who became

a Dominican) the following dialogue took place between the officiating heretic and the *Croyant:*

"*Friend, if you will belong to us, you must renounce the whole faith of the Church of Rome.*" "*I renounce it.*"

"*Do you renounce the cross made with chrism by the priest at your baptism, upon your breast, head, and shoulders?*" "*I renounce it.*"

"*Do you believe that the water of baptism can give salvation?*" "*No, I do not.*"

"*Do you renounce the veil placed on your head by the priest after baptism?*" "*I renounce it.*"

The Catharists further declared baptism to be of diabolic origin. (*N.B.*—The primitive Manichæans had a form of baptism valid in Rome in the time of St. Leo.)

(2) *Confirmation.*—Repudiated.

(3) *Penance.*—Confession and absolution were unanimously rejected by all Catharist sects. They said that not even the Pope could give absolution. "It was doubtless to defend the practice of confession against this absolute denial that the fourth Lateran Council rendered it obligatory at least once a year."

(4) *Holy Communion.*—Repudiated entirely. *Sacramentum Eucharistie non est.* It was "vain and empty because the Body and Blood of Christ had never truly existed." If the Incarnation was impossible, then (they argued) the Sacrament of the Altar was a thousand times more so. One heretic told the Bishop of Alet that he would rather be flayed alive than believe in transubstantiation—giving, curiously, as one of his reasons that a man who received the Body of Christ would be incapable of sinning. Viaticum was refused by the dying. (The action of the heretics had caused a great falling off in the number of communions of the faithful, as St. Bernard witnesses.) They said Mass was of diabolical origin, rejecting it and all worship of the Blessed Sacrament.

(5) *Order.*—Denied absolutely. A priest "had no other virtue than any other man." They argued that the Church being the synagogue of Satan, its ministers if really consecrated obtain their powers from the devil. If the devil had not instituted them, then their ordinance was a mere empty rite. From a perfectly different standpoint they argued (with Luther, Wicliffe, and Huss) that sin on the part of a priest took away his sacerdotal power. This explains the furious, continuous attack on priests

made by the heretics. Yet they had a kind of hierarchy of their own.

(6) *Marriage.*—Absolutely abhorred by heretics. For, "as the ideal of life is death and its perfection suicide," marriage, by which children were born into the world and "fresh souls torn from the regions of light," was considered unpardonable immorality. (On this question, one of the most important of those connected with Catharism as a social danger, see especially Guiraud, *Cartulaire de Prouille*, Preface.)

(7) *Extreme unction* was repudiated, and refused by all the dying. For the Sacramental System thus repudiated the Catharists substituted the *Consolamentum*. This, except in the case of those who received it on their death-bed, was preceded by a *probatio* of one year, during which the postulant lived with a *Parfait* (or *Parfaite*, as the case might be), "*adoring*" his master daily, and observing, like him, the most rigorous abstinence. The Ritual of the *Consolamentum* was elaborate. (See Guiraud, *Questions d'Histoire*, &c., Initiation Cathare.) At the close, after having renounced the Church, the Sacraments (especially marriage), and having promised (if married) never to see husband or wife again; never to kill an animal, never to lie or swear, never to be alone, day nor night, to observe perpetual abstinence even from eggs and milk . . . never to betray his faith, the postulant kneeling, bowed his head, while the officiating *Parfait* laid upon it the New Testament, and the other "good men" in turn laid their hands upon him. A woman was not touched, the book being held above her head.

This was the actual ceremony of *Consolamentum*, after which the *Croyant* became a "clothed heretic," wearing a long black garment, with a girdle of cord next the skin under the dress. The Parfaits rejected, among other things, (1) *Prayer* (except the *Paternoster*) and the entire Catholic Cult; (2) *the Sign of the Cross* (all were bidden to spit upon the Cross); (3) *the worship of Saints.*—One heretic was in the habit of saying he and his fellows could save men better than Our Lady. Miracles of Saints were denied. (4) *Prayers for dead.*—The bodies of the dead were almost thrown away, sometimes into a river or disused pit. For the Catharist there was no Resurrection. (5) *Hell and Purgatory*, on which their teaching was absurd and paradoxical. They gave no definite code of morals to their followers, the *Croyants*, who were permitted to live in the most unspeakable

laxity; their "sermons" consisted of (*a*) virulent abuse of the priesthood, (*b*) praise of themselves and their own austerities. At the same time, it has been pointed out that there is no proof these austerities were not real, and that the shocking immorality of the *Croyants* cannot be attributed to the *Parfaits*.[1] By their followers they were considered sinless, but if one fell into sin his state was hopeless. Their souls were exempt from the necessity of transmigration. They were abjectly venerated and "adored" by the *Croyants*, and their benediction was the highest honour. Men and women lived apart in the "convents" or heretic houses sown so thickly over Languedoc in St. Dominic's day, in which the education and proselytising of the children confided to their care was carried on. These houses were on the lines of Buddhist monasteries, as the *Parfaits* themselves resembled the "*Sramanas*," and the *Croyants* the "*Oupasakas*" of Buddhism. In these convents both men and women sought to attain the state of *Nirvana*. One such case was witnessed to before the Inquisition. All this is merely another link connecting the sect with the distant religions of India and the East.

The *Vaudois*, or Waldensian sect, must by no means be confused with the Catharists or Albigensians.

The enormous quantity of available matter which it is impossible to condense into the limits of this appendix is of absorbing interest. The writer has spoken with people who appear to think that the heresy fought by St. Dominic (the cruel Inquisitor!) was an early and agreeable form of Protestantism. Even Catholics seem sometimes doubtful on the subject. To such readers this necessarily imperfect sketch of the neo-Manichæan or Catharist heresy will at any rate prove that it was not even nominally Christian. Its enormous influence in the religious and social life of the XIII century can best be realised by the fact that to combat Catharism, Pope Innocent proclaimed the great Crusade; St. Dominic founded the Order of Preachers.

1 "Examine their way of life," cries St. Bernard; "you will find nothing less reprehensible."

APPENDIX B

Transcription of Fourteenth Century MS., facing p. 303.

Theuthonicum loquebatur beatus Dominicus. Ex legenda eiusdem.

De Tholosa quoque vadens Parisius pater sanctus cum ad Rupem Amatoriam venisset, ibidem in ecclesia beate Marie devote vigilans pernoctavit, habens comitem itineris societatis et devocionis fratrem Bertrandum, virum sanctum, qui fuit provincie primus prior. In crastino vero procedentes habuerunt in via obvios quosdam Theuthonicos peregrinos. Qui audientes virum Dei cum socio psalmos et lectiones orando frequentare, adheserunt eis devote. Venientes autem ad villam invitaverunt sanctos, et eos more consueto dapsiliter procuraverunt. Sicque fecerunt per quatuor dies continuos. Quarta autem die ingemiscens beatus Dominicus socio suo dixit: Frater Bertrande, vere lesam habeo conscientiam, quod istorum peregrinorum carnalia metimus, cum eis spiritualia non seminamus. Si placet, flexis genibus oremus Dominum, ut lingue eorum nobis det intelligenciam pariter et loquelam, ut eis Dominum Iesum annunciare possimus. Qui cum orassent, stupentibus illis intelligibiliter ydioma theuthonicum sunt locuti, aliosque dies quatuor ambulantes et loquentes cum eis de Domino Iesu tandem Aurelianis venerunt.

Dimiserunt autem eos Theuthonici in strata Parisiensi, eorum se orationibus humiliter commendantes. Altera autem die dixit humilis pater fratri: Ecce, frater, ingredimur Parisius, et si sciverint fratres miraculum quod Dominus dedit nobis, credent nos sanctos, cum simus peccatores; et si ad seculares pervenerit, multe patebimus vanitati. Per obedientiam igitur tibi precipio, ne ante mortem meam alicui hominum ista dicas. Sic ergo res latuit, donec post mortem ipsius frater Bertrandus devotis fratribus indicavit.

Alio etiam tempore iter agens pater sanctus obvium quendam

habuit hominem Dei sanctum. Contristatus est autem, quod eum alloqui non poterat, eo quod lingue illius et ydiomatis intelligenciam non haberet. Tunc consolacionis celestis fraterneque edificacionis fragrans desiderio servus Dei Dominicus ad Dominum se in oratione convertit postulans, ut sibi concederet perfrui colloquio eius qui sibi occurrerat viri Dei. Et ecce, datum est utrique per spiritum Dei, ut variis linguis alterutrum loquerentur. Sicque per tres dies quibus simul gradiebantur, spiritualibus sermonibus et divinis colloquiis affecti tandem consolati in Domino valedicentes ab invicem discesserunt.

Bâle, Library of the University (Basel, Universitäts-bibliothek), cod. B. IX. 12, fol. 276, "Alphabetum narrationum" written by Konrad von Waltenkofen, O.P., in the year 1360 (originally in library of O.P. Convent, Bâle).

(Transcription by the Very Rev. Dr. Franz Steffens, Professor of Palæography in the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.)

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